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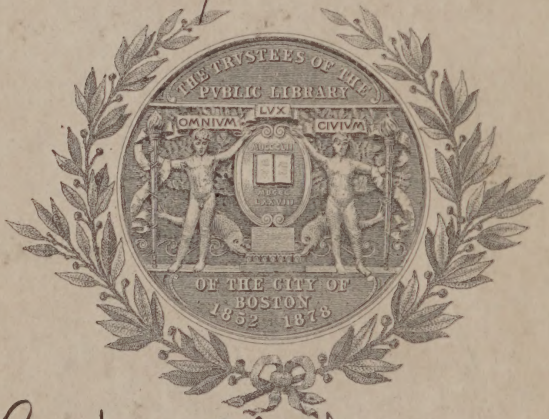

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Luther Clark, M.D.

THE

PRACTICAL NATURE

OF THE

DOCTRINES AND ALLEGED REVELATIONS

CONTAINED IN THE WRITINGS OF

Emanuel Swedenborg:

TOGETHER WITH

THE PECULIAR MOTIVES TO CHRISTIAN CONDUCT THEY SUGGEST.

IN

A LETTER

TO HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN,

OCCASIONED BY

HIS OBSERVATIONS ON THAT SUBJECT IN HIS "ESSAYS ON SOME OF THE PECULIARITIES OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION."

BY THE REV. AUGUSTUS CLISSOLD, M. A.,

FORMERLY OF EXETER COLLEGE, OXFORD.

"It is recommended to take a *comprehensive* view of any question that may be agitated, instead of being exclusively occupied in answering every cavil that may be brought forward."—*Whately's Bampton Lectures.*

"Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper and making the heart better."—*Bishop Butler's Sermon upon the Ignorance of Man.*

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TO THE READER.

In the "Essays on some of the peculiarities of the Christian Religion," by His Grace the present Archbishop of Dublin, occurs the following passage relative to the receivers of the writings of Swedenborg:—"Though his followers insist much on the importance of believing in this pretended revelation, it would, I believe, be difficult for them to state even any one point on which a man is called upon to alter either his conduct, his motives, or his moral sentiments, in consequence of such belief. The system furnishes abundant matter of faith and food for curiosity, but has little or no intelligible reference to practice."

In this statement there appears to be a slight obscurity. It might not, perhaps, be easy at first to determine whether the passage implied, that there was no difference between the practical principles of Swedenborg and those commonly received, or that, as a whole, his writings had little or no intelligible reference to any practice whatever. A gentleman, it appears, conceiving that the latter was meant, wrote to the Archbishop to the effect, that he presumed His Grace labored under some misapprehension; for that, so far from having no intelligible reference to practice, the writings of Swedenborg advocated principles which many distinguished members of the Church of England themselves acknowledged to be practical. So far as the argument went, it appears to be just and appropriate.

His Grace's answer, as appended in the note inserted in the Fourth Edition of the Essays, seems to leave the question where it was; except that, instead of using the term system, and thereby implying that, as a whole, Swe-

denborg's theological writings were non-practical, a distinction appears to be drawn between Swedenborg's doctrines and revelations, as though the former were practical, and the latter not so. Accordingly, this is the point of view in which His Grace's objections are considered in the ensuing Letter; for, whatever may have been the intention of the Author, this I believe to be the fair meaning of his words. My design, however, on the present occasion, has been rather to take a comprehensive view of the subject, than to answer the particular statements of any individual writer. It cannot be denied, that the Essays regard the revelations of Swedenborg as non-practical, and hence, so far, a delusion; that this, also, is an opinion not unfrequently entertained by others. I have, therefore, viewed Swedenborg's writings, with an especial relation to their practical tendency; first, treating of his Doctrines; secondly, of his Interpretation of the Word of God; and, lastly, of his supposed Intercourse with the Spiritual World. With respect to ordinary misconceptions and misrepresentations of the principles contained in the theological works of Swedenborg, it has been usual to pass them over unnoticed; but where any thing like argument is advanced, and more particularly by a person of influential opinions, the case is different; and it may become advisable for a receiver of Swedenborg's writings to give a reason for the hope that is in him.

May the reader peruse the following observations, with the same spirit in which the author has endeavored to write them; namely, with an earnest desire of that truth which alone is able to make him wise unto salvation.

With respect to the passages in His Grace's Essays, more or less alluding to the subject in question, to quote them all would be to quote a considerable portion of the Essays themselves; it cannot, therefore, be expected that they should all be adduced on the present occasion; hence, if the reader is desirous of being more fully acquainted with them, he is referred to the original works. In order, however, to supply him with a faithful idea of the general argument urged in the Essays, it may be well to subjoin the following extracts, which are those which more immediately gave rise to the present letter, and which

more pointedly allude to Swedenborg's doctrines and alleged revelations.

Essays (first series) on Some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion. Fourth Edition, Revised.

EXTRACTS.

P. 218. "Though enough is revealed to us in Scripture to instruct us in our duty, and to incite us to the practice of it, there is much also that is *not* revealed, which many, at least, would be eagerly desirous to know. It suppresses much of what some vainly seek to find in it, or complain of not finding,—which all pretended revelations profess, and might be expected to profess, to make known,—and which a true revelation, and none but a true one, might be expected to omit."

P. 220. "The peculiar feature (of the Christian Religion) which I allude to, consists in this; that not only of the designs and attributes of the Almighty, there are some which he has vouchsafed to make known to man by revelation, and others which he has thought fit to keep secret; but also those which *are* revealed, have some *relation* to man,—some reference to human conduct,—and are, in some way or other, of a practical character.

"Now, since it is undeniable that there have been, and are, many systems of false religion in the world, all of which profess to reveal something, as to the nature of God and his dealings with his creatures, this circumstance is frequently dwelt upon by those who studiously endeavor to confound all religions together, with a view to hold up all to equal contempt, as so many various systems of imposture and delusion. And others, again, though they do not absolutely reject our religion, are yet so far misled by this fallacy, as to regard it with indifference. It will be worth while, therefore, to examine attentively the point above mentioned; I mean, the exclusively *practical* character which I have attributed to our revelation; and to inquire more fully, whether it is likely to constitute an important and distinguishing feature in any professed revelation which may possess it; in other words, whether the abstaining from *points of mere curiosity*, be a probable *mark of a true revelation.*

"This inquiry falls naturally under two heads; first, whether or not a *pretended* revelation is likely to contain any matters which are interesting to curiosity alone, and

have no reference to practice; and, secondly, whether this is likely to be the case with a *true* revelation.

"The former of these questions we need not hesitate, I think, to answer in the affirmative.

"That the desire of knowledge, for its own sake, is a part of our nature, is a truth so obvious, as hardly to need being insisted on. For though it is common to hear men imply the contrary, by asking contemptuously, in the case of some pursuit for which they happen to have no relish,—'What is the *use* of learning this or that?—What advantage is to be derived from such and such a branch of knowledge?'—yet the very same persons, if some discovery be the next moment announced to them, of a different kind, which may happen to fall in with their own taste, will probably be found to manifest the liveliest interest, and the most eager curiosity, even where they would be at a loss to point out what practical benefit they are likely to derive from it. So far, indeed, is utility from being the sole standard of value in men's minds, that even such knowledge as *is* useful, is in general sought more for its own sake, than with a view to utility; nor are men ever more eager in the pursuit of it, than when they have no further object to occupy them. 'Accordingly,' as is justly observed by an ancient writer, who well understood human nature, 'when we are at leisure from the cares of necessary business, then are we eager to see, to hear, to learn something; regarding the knowledge of what is hidden, or of what is admirable, as an essential ingredient of happiness.'* He is quite right in the circumstances fixed on as most exciting our interest; things *hidden*, and things *admirable*, being what men especially covet to know. Now, nothing can be more hidden, nothing more admirable, than the nature, and the works, of God,—the origin and constitution of the world we inhabit—of the rest of that vast system of which it forms a part—and of man himself—the nature of various orders of beings which may exist, superior to man, and of the Supreme Being Himself. Each of these subjects suggests innumerable matters of inquiry, whose grandeur fills the most exalted, and whose difficulty baffles the most intelligent, mind. Is it not, then, natural, that men should eagerly seek for some superhuman means of information, on subjects so interesting to their curiosity, and so much beyond their unaided powers? And is it not, consequently, to be expected, that both

* Cicero de Officiis, b. I.

the devices of an impostor, and the visions of an enthusiast, should abound in food for this curiosity?—that the one should seek for proselytes by professing to communicate what men are so desirous of knowing; and that the other should be altogether occupied with those questions to which the imagination of men is so naturally turned, till a diseased fancy mistakes its day-dreams for a revelation?

"Such, I say, is what we might be prepared, from the nature of man, to expect: and, if we consult history, we shall find our conjecture fully borne out by facts. In all those other religions, and in all those modifications of our own, which we attribute to the imagination or to the artifice of man, the pretended revelations not only abound with matters of speculative curiosity, unconnected with practice, but are sometimes even principally made up of them, so as to appear to have for their chief object the communication of knowledge concerning heavenly things, for its own sake.

"To illustrate this by a full examination of all the various systems of false revelation, would be manifestly both tedious and unnecessary: tedious, inasmuch as even a brief sketch of them would occupy a considerable volume; and unnecessary, for most readers, since a few moments' recollection will enable them to recall, from their previous knowledge, enough to confirm, to a great degree at least, the remark which has just been made. And the conclusion will be more strengthened, the further the inquiry is pursued."

After speaking of the mythologies of the Greeks, Romans, and Hindoos, and of the imposture practised by Mahomed, His Grace observes, with regard to the Koran, p. 227,—

"It would be wearisome and disgusting to introduce such specimens as would fully illustrate what has been asserted; though it is scarcely possible adequately to describe in words how forcibly it will be impressed on the mind, on actual perusal, that the prevailing character of the book in question is such as has been described. But those who will be at the pains to examine this and other pretended revelations, with an express view to the subject of our present inquiry, will meet with abundant instances to confirm what has been here advanced; more than they, perhaps, are aware of, if they have a mere general acquaintance with those systems, but have never considered them with

reference to the particular point now before us. Such an inquiry, it may be safely affirmed, would be profitable and satisfactory, if fully pursued; and would communicate a lively interest to the perusal even of the most absurd reveries of heathen mythology, and of the Koran. But it will be sufficient in this place to have suggested some of the principal points, towards which the inquiry should be directed."

After alluding to the fables of the Talmud, and the legends of the Greek and Romish churches, His Grace observes, p. 229,—

"Lastly, to advert to a more recent instance, look to the visions of the pretended prophet Swedenborg; himself the dupe, as is generally supposed, of his own distempered fancy. It is well known, that he professed to have been favored with most copious and distinct revelations,—to have visited the celestial abodes, and to have conversed with various orders of beings; of all which he gives minute descriptions. Yet, though his followers insist much on the importance of believing in this pretended revelation, it would, I believe, be difficult for them to state even any one point, in which a man is called upon to alter either his conduct, his motives, or his moral sentiments, in consequence of such belief. The system furnishes abundant matter of faith, and food for curiosity; but has little or no intelligible reference to practice."

(Note. "I received, some time ago, a friendly communication from a person of this persuasion, referring to the above passage, and complaining of the current misrepresentations respecting the doctrines of the Swedenborgians. He set forth, in a brief outline, their fundamental points of faith, and principles of duty; which were, as he studiously pointed out to me,—essentially in agreement with what is held by our own church.

"From his own account, therefore, it appears, (as I pointed out in reply) that the point *peculiar* to that sect,—the supposed revelation to their founder, in which they believe, is entirely of a non-practical character. Now this is precisely what I was maintaining.

"I was not designing any attack on that, or on any other religious persuasion; nor do I deny its including the fundamentals of Christianity. I had in view only what *distinguishes* the followers of Swedenborg from the rest of the

Christian world, viz: their faith in a revelation, which the rest hold to be a delusion. The truth or falsity of that revelation,—a question on which, of course, I must differ from them,—is one which I had no intention of discussing. But that, whether true or false, it is at least distinguished from the revelation contained in the Gospel, by leading to no practical conclusions, is a point it seems on which both parties are agreed. And this is the only point I had in view.")

"Such, then, being the character of false revelations, what may we expect from a true one? Since both reason and experience show, that it is the obvious policy of an impostor, and the most natural delusion of a visionary, to treat much of curious and hidden matters, relative to the Divine operations, beyond what is conducive to practical instruction, it should next be considered, whether the case is likely to be the same with a real revelation; whether *that* also is likely to be much occupied in ministering to speculative curiosity. Now, this question we may, on good grounds, answer in the negative: for the *general* rule of Providence evidently is, that man should be left to supply his own wants, and seek knowledge, both practical and speculative, by the aid of those faculties which have been originally bestowed on him. A revelation is an extraordinary and miraculous *exception* to this general rule; and it seems, therefore, reasonable to conclude, that it should be bestowed for some very important purpose. Now the knowledge of our duty, beyond what is discoverable by unaided reason,—instruction how we are to serve God, and obtain his favor,—does seem a sufficiently important purpose; but not so, the mere gratification of curiosity. The desire of knowledge is, indeed, implanted in us by our Creator; and the pursuit of it is an innocent, and honorable, and highly pleasurable employment of our faculties: but there is a sufficiently wide field of investigation within the reach of our natural faculties. There seems no reason why the Almighty should work a miracle for the increase of our mere speculative knowledge; not to mention that our gratification consists more in the *pursuit* and *acquirement*, by our own efforts, of such knowledge, than in the possession of it.

"Whatever, therefore, it concerns us practically to know, with a view to the regulation of the heart and conduct,—whatever God requires us to be, and to do, in order to become acceptable in his sight—this, it seems consonant to his justice and goodness to declare to us by revelation,

when, of ourselves, we are incompetent to discover it; but that He should miraculously reveal any thing besides this, for the gratification of an inquisitive mind, there seems no good reason to expect.

"It may be said, indeed, that the trial of our faith, humility, and candor, in assenting, on sufficient authority, to mysterious doctrines, is a worthy and fit purpose, for which such doctrines may be revealed. This is, undoubtedly, true; and the purpose may even be fairly reckoned a practical one, since so good a moral effect results from such belief. If, therefore, none of the doctrines necessary to be revealed for *other* practical purposes, were of such a mysterious character, as to serve for trials of faith also, we might, perhaps, expect that some things should be proposed to our belief, solely and singly for this latter purpose. But if both objects can be fully accomplished by the same revelation,—if our faith be sufficiently tried by the admission of such mysterious doctrines as are important for other practical ends also,—then, the revelation of any further mysteries which lead to no such practical end, is the less necessary, and, consequently, the less to be expected.

"What then is, in this respect, the character of our religion? It may safely be asserted, that it is precisely such as we have seen a true revelation might be expected to be: that it teaches us what is needful for us to know, but little or nothing besides; that the information it imparts is such, as concerns the regulation of our character and practice, but leaves our curiosity unsatisfied.

"Those who are sufficiently conversant with the Scriptures, will at once recognize this as a characteristic feature of them.

"To prove the point in question as fully as might be done, would require a detailed examination of the whole Bible; and such an examination, diligently conducted with a view to the particular point before us, is one which may be recommended, not merely to professed theological students, but (since it calls for no great ingenuity or learning) to Christian readers in general; as neither an unprofitable nor unpleasing inquiry, to him who delights in contrasting the wisdom, and the dignified simplicity of God's Word, with the idle and arrogant pretensions of human fraud and folly."

P. 250, "He (the infidel) may ask them (Christians,) how it came to pass, that no one of our sacred writers has given a full, minute, and engaging account of all that is (according to him) to take place at the end of the world;

of all the interesting particulars of the day of judgment; of the new bodies with which men will arise; and of 'the glories that shall be revealed' in heaven; or has given any account at all (or at least any from which a decisive conclusion can be drawn,) of the condition in which men are to remain during the interval between death and the resurrection? It is plain, that nothing could have been more *gratifying* to the curiosity of all who had an interest in the subject; nothing more likely even to *allure* fresh converts, than a glowing description of the joys of heaven. It would have been easily *believed*, too, by those who gave credit to the writer, as it is plain Paul supposed the Corinthians did; —it would have been very *easy*, again, for an *impostor* to give a loose to his fancy, in inventing such a description; and to an* *enthusiast* it would have been unavoidable: he who was passing off his day-dreams for revelations, on himself as well as on others, would have been sure to dream largely on such a subject. Why, then, did not Paul do any thing of the kind? I answer, because he was *not* an impostor, nor an enthusiast, but taught only what had been actually revealed to him, and what he was commissioned to reveal to others."

P. 256, "In this present life we should carefully guard against the too prevailing error of presumptuous inquiries, and attempts to explain unrevealed mysteries; an error which generally leaves men the more bewildered and mistaken, the greater their ingenuity and diligence.

"Little as there is revealed to us of the condition of our first parents in paradise, thus much (and let Christians never forget it) is plainly taught us, that they fell from their happy state through the desire of *forbidden knowledge*. It was by seeking from *men* to become 'as *gods*, knowing good and evil,' that they incurred that loss, to retrieve which God was made Man, in Christ Jesus; who 'took upon him the form of a servant, and *humbled* himself unto death, even the death of the cross, to redeem us, the children of Adam,' whom *want* of humility had ruined; and to open to us the gates of eternal life, which presumptuous transgression had shut. How, then, can we hope to enter in, if we repeat the very transgression of Adam, in seeking to be wise above that which is written? By inquisitive pride was immortal happiness forfeited; and the path by which we

* In this Essay, Mahomed is the only impostor, and Swedenborg the only enthusiast—specified *by name*.

must travel back to its recovery, is that of patient and resigned humility."

A few extracts are taken, in the course of the present Letter, from other parts of the Essays; also from His Grace's Sermons, and Bampton Lectures, to which the reader is referred. It may be desirable to add, with regard to the extracts, not only from these works, but from all which are quoted in the course of the ensuing Letter, that there has been every desire to represent faithfully the meaning of the respective authors, and carefully to guard against every possibility of their arguments being misunderstood. Should the slightest error in this respect have been committed, the reader may be assured it has been committed inadvertently, and will be rectified on the first opportunity which occurs after it is pointed out, as the only design of the ensuing pages is—the truth.

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A

LETTER

TO

HIS GRACE THE LORD ARCHBISHOP OF DUBLIN.

My Lord Archbishop,—

If ever there were a period, in which the members of the Christian church were called upon "to believe not every spirit, but to try the spirits whether they be of God," "to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good," the present assuredly is one. The disposition to inquiry which has been awakened, the spread of education, the increasing desire of knowledge, and the extraordinary progress of the sciences, however sometimes exaggerated, have been sufficient to lead many sober and reflecting minds to contemplate, as not improbable, a new aspect in the history of the world; and, when we connect these circumstances with the disregard of human authority in matters of religion, the asserted right of private judgment, the conflicting views which are entertained, even upon the most important principles of Christianity, it will be granted, I presume, that, if ever learning, sound judgment, piety and diligence were required in the clergy, they are assuredly most requisite now. When to this we add, that, among a considerable portion of the Christian community, there prevails a variety of expectations, with respect to prophecies in Scripture, the fulfilment of which many believe to be not far distant, there is, assuredly, the more particular reason, why the Christian community should be on its guard, lest any enthusiast should avail himself of these expectations, and delude both himself and his followers; more especially as, under the circumstances we have mentioned,

the probability is that enthusiasts would arise, and that many, consequently, would be deluded. It is remarkable that the introduction of new dispensations by the Almighty seems, in general, to have given occasion for opposite and rival claims to the truth. When Moses wrought miracles before Pharaoh, counter miracles were said to be wrought by the magi. When Christ cast out devils from the possessed, similar claims to miraculous power were asserted to exist among the Pharisees. When Christ assumed the character of King of the Jews, rival pretensions were made by others. "Before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody, to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves, who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee, in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him; he also perished, and all, as many as obeyed him, were dispersed." (Acts v. 36.) At the second coming of Christ into the world, we are told, it shall be the same; "for there shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders, insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect." (Matt. xxiv. 24.) Thus, at the end of the old and the beginning of new dispensations, arise false and true prophets in every direction; whence pretensions of both kinds become so mixed up one with the other, that, unless possessed of a clear spiritual discernment, a person runs the risk of receiving the false as the true, or the true as the false, or of rejecting indiscriminately both together; and so, in order to avoid the snare of enthusiasm, of falling into the pit of infidelity.

In all cases of this kind, whether we believe in a further revelation or not, Your Grace has referred us to an excellent guide, namely, that of practical utility. Whatever has a tendency to lead men to repent of their sins, and to love God and their neighbor, may safely be pronounced to be of God; whatever has no such tendency, when understood, may safely be pronounced to be of man. This test of truth, then, I am willing to receive as the best possible, because, although there are mysteries in the Bible, which, as Your Grace observes, at present have no other tendency than that of exercising our faith, yet, when once their nature is revealed, we are ready to admit, for the sake of the argument, they will be seen to be in some manner still further practically useful. This test of truth seems also to be

the one which St. John, in his Epistle, 1. c. iii. v. 18, pointed out, when he says, "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth; and hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him." The love of God and of our neighbor, therefore, as the fruit of our doctrines, being considered an evidence of their truth, the test, in order for it to be used impartially, should be applied, not only to the principles of those whom we may consider to be enthusiasts and impostors, but also to our own; since, if we do not examine our own principles by this test, as well as those of others, we may be in the situation of one who, in securing his house against an enemy, may be shutting him in, while he imagines he is shutting him out. It is a tendency of human nature to apply to others what we forget to apply to ourselves, and it is one which deserves more particular notice on the present occasion, because, when it is said that the system of Swebenborg, if tried by this test, is found to have little or no reference to practice; so, on the other hand, Swedenborg maintains that the system commonly received, when tried by the same test, is found, in too many cases, not only to have no intelligible reference to practice, but, what is far worse, one that is highly pernicious. The ground, therefore, upon which the distinguished author of the Essays has rejected the system of Swedenborg, is the ground upon which Swedenborg himself has rejected the system commonly received. Which of the two is right, is the question at issue.

While, however, there are some who are equitable enough to apply the test we have mentioned, to the principles of Swedenborg, however they may forget to apply it to their own, yet it must be admitted, that by far the greater class neglect the application altogether, and hence, amid the multiplicity of exhortations which are given by well-meaning persons to "try the spirits," and "to prove all things," there is nothing which they and their hearers are, in general, more sure to omit than the thing which they recommend, namely, the trial and the proof; the one having given the exhortation, and the other having listened to it, the question is considered as fairly decided, and the whole matter to be at an end. Besides, many regard an inquiry of this kind as unnecessary; for, believing themselves to be already in possession of the truth, whatever does not happen to conform to their views, they think they have nothing to do but to reject, and hence, simple rejec-

tion they consider as constituting the whole of their duty. The examination, therefore, if they ever commence any, is not, whether their principles are conformable to the truth, but whether the views of others are conformable to their principles. They profess, indeed, that works are the evidence of faith; but they regard a man's faith as the evidence of his works, for, however holy he may be in his life, however full of good offices towards his fellow-creatures, yet, if this be the consequence of his reception of the principles of Swedenborg, he is looked upon as a deceiver and as self-deceived. There are few, my Lord, who now adopt those principles, who did not once oppose them, and many, perhaps, conscientiously. The recollection, therefore, of their own errors inclines them to look upon those of others with a spirit of forbearance and forgiveness; for they see in their opponents only the same misapprehensions, the same prepossessions, or, it may be, the same natural and carnal ideas, which once, perhaps, were their own. Although, therefore, there are many, who, from a variety of causes, have been led to regard Swedenborg as merely "a pretended prophet," "the dupe of a distempered fancy," and, consequently, the receivers of his writings as the victims of a religious delusion, and the credulous readers of "pretended revelations," which have "little or no intelligible reference to practice;" we feel ourselves bound, in all Christian charity, to give them credit for what, to them, may be conscientious convictions; although, if it be not demonstrated, yet it will, I think, be rendered highly probable, in the ensuing letter, that they know not what they are rejecting. In consequence of the general ignorance which prevails with respect to the writings of Swedenborg, we have not only to disclaim principles which others would impute to us, but, as in the present instance, to communicate true ideas of that which it is their design to oppose; surely they should reflect, that though the arrow may be good, as also the bow, and the archer the first of his race, yet if he does not know what or where is the mark, it is not likely he will hit it. Although, therefore, for this reason, I cannot but consider the observations in the Essays, with regard to Swedenborg, to be erroneous, yet it is with pleasure I acknowledge the courtesy with which the subject is noticed, the apparent disposition of the author to do justice to the question, and his practical exemplification of some of the Christian precepts inculcated in his Bampton lectures; for, notwithstanding he seems to designate Sweden-

borg as a visionary and enthusiast, as well as to imply that his followers are similarly deluded, yet, if a person comes to this conclusion, in consequence of argument conducted in a fair spirit, he is perfectly at liberty to use the expressions, because, however we may regret the mistake under which he labors, the error, if any, does not consist in the use of the terms, but in the principles which led to their use.

These principles it will be my object to examine; and, in so doing, Your Grace will, I doubt not, concede that freedom of expression which is willingly granted to those who oppose us, and which is necessary to the fair and full exposition of our sentiments. A candid examination of principles, with a view to prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good, Your Grace will not confound with a spirit of controversy; more especially as this is a spirit which you have justly deprecated, and, at the same time, did not conceive it to be inconsistent to undertake a proof, though *indirect*,* that the alleged revelations of Swedenborg are untrue.

Of those general principles, from which the Essays have arrived at their several conclusions, I have great pleasure in admitting some to be true, though I cannot but consider, that, with respect to Swedenborg, they prove the reverse of what the Essays have stated; a great portion of these principles, however, I humbly conceive to be mistaken. Nevertheless, inasmuch as they are not unfrequently held, they are arranged, in the following remarks, under the head of popular objections; which is done the more willingly, because it enables me to consider them rather as the sentiments of a class of society, than merely as those of a single individual; and if I quote Your Grace's particular statements, it is only because, proceeding from so eminent a quarter, they may be considered as the more authentic and tangible expositions of the opinions maintained by oth-

* It is said an *indirect* proof, because this appears to be all that is meant by the words "the truth or falsity of that revelation I had no intention of discussing;" since it would seem the only object of the Essay was to distinguish a true from a false revelation, by the circumstance of the former having relation to practice, and the latter having none; in illustration of which, are instanced the alleged revelations of Swedenborg, of which, it is observed, "the system furnishes abundant matter of faith and food for curiosity, but has little or no intelligible reference to practice;" and it is immediately added, "*such being the character of false revelations*, what may we expect from a true one?" It is concluded, therefore, that one object of the Essays *was* to discuss the truth or falsity of Swedenborg's revelations, and that all that the author means by the expression above alluded to, is, that he did not undertake any *direct* proof of the revelations of Swedenborg being untrue, which indeed is the case.

ers. The reader is, therefore, requested to bear in mind, that, in the following remarks, I am not answering particular objections urged only by some particular author, but objections founded on general principles not unfrequently entertained.

Before proceeding to the consideration of the subject, allow me to express my sense of its awful importance; for if it be not a delusion, many are the deluded. Could learning and attainments decide the question, I must, in the present case, bow with respectful deference to my opponent. Nothing but a persuasion, that these qualifications, however admirable, are not those which are only or even chiefly requisite to decide the question, induces me to take a part in the discussion. Besides, even if they were, I cannot but recollect that many of the receivers of Swedenborg's writings have, in these respects, been perfectly equal to those who differed from them, while Swedenborg himself was a man of most distinguished attainments. All to which I can venture to lay claim, is, an impartial desire of the truth, and a willingness, wherever I think I see it, if necessary, to forsake all in order to follow it. If the receivers of the writings of Swedenborg be in error, and if the error be that of the understanding, rather than of the heart, the divine mercy will, doubtless, not allow them finally to fail in their salvation; while, on the other hand, if the opponents of those writings be in error, the same mercy awaits them with open arms, if, like St. Paul, they have erred ignorantly in unbelief. My conviction is, that such is the fact; and, in stating some few of the reasons for which I have been led to this conclusion, I sincerely trust that I may be guided by the Spirit of Truth, that the reader will suffer himself to be led by the same Spirit, and not feel offended, if, on a subject of so great importance, I speak plainly, and, without hesitation, endeavor to lay the axe to the root of the tree.*

Before touching upon the general question, I would observe, that there are a few points, perhaps, peculiar to Your Grace's view of the argument, one of which I will briefly notice. Having admitted the practical character of the doctrines, mention is made of the non-practical character of the revelations. The doctrines of Sweden-

* I beg leave to say, once for all, that if, in explaining the views of Swedenborg, I have any where expressed myself incorrectly, or not with sufficient clearness, the reader will not do justice to the subject without referring to the original author.

borg, it is admitted, are fundamentally the same with those commonly received; therefore, there is nothing practical in his alleged revelations. I confess I am at a loss to perceive the sequence of the conclusion, and, though unable to deduce from the observation any other meaning, yet I can scarcely bring myself to believe that I have rightly apprehended the argument; for, even supposing the doctrines were precisely the same with those which are commonly received, and that these doctrines were true, why might there not be revelations, perfectly in accordance with them, developing their nature to a much greater extent than was previously known, and supplying us with principles of much greater purity, than those we previously possessed? Do we not see the possibility of this circumstance illustrated in the case of those whose general orthodoxy has not been doubted by their respective followers, and who yet have looked forward to a period upon earth, when the mysteries of the divine dispensations will be more fully revealed, and the doctrines which are considered to be practical, and yet inscrutable, will be better understood? Now, if they are better understood, why should a revelation to this effect, be considered as non-practical; and why, therefore, even if the doctrines of Swedenborg were the same with those generally received, must it follow that an alleged revelation, which might be a further development of these doctrines, would necessarily be of a non-practical character? This observation is made, the rather, because it is admitted, that the doctrines of Swedenborg are of a practical character; and it will be shewn how his alleged revelations are in a great part, only a further development of his doctrines.

Previous, therefore, to any remarks upon the alleged revelations, it will be necessary to make a few observations on the subject of these DOCTRINES.

That there are writers in the Established Church, who occasionally deliver sentiments in perfect accordance with some of those of Swedenborg, is acknowledged with pleasure; whether a person would hence be at liberty to infer, that there was no essential difference between the doctrines of Swedenborg and those which are commonly professed, seems to be another question. A receiver of the writings of Swedenborg often *imagines* that there is this difference,—the *imagination*, if such it be, is often to him the source of great regret; and it is no little relief to his feelings, to be able to point out, in the different authors for which the

church is distinguished, principles in which he is happy to coincide. For what pleasure can he take in excluding himself from the social interchange of sentiment with his fellow-creatures? In pursuing this course, however, he is immediately liable to this inconvenience: it is replied, your professed revelation cannot be true, because it pretends to be new, whereas, its principles are old, or fundamentally the same with those which are generally received. On the other hand, if peculiarities in those principles are pointed out, they are, for this reason, presumed to be erroneous, being considered to be only the distinctions of a sect.* Now, nothing is more remarkable to an observant mind, than the contradictory views which are taken of the doctrines of Swedenborg, even by learned and eminent men. A late prelate of the Church of England denounced them as preposterous and heretical, and in so doing was countenanced by other members of the church; yet the late Bishop Porteus, who was distinguished for both his piety and learning, publicly sanctioned the preaching of these doctrines in his own diocese; and, in the following words, encouraged a clergyman to continue to disseminate them: "I see no particular objection to the ideas which you have stated, and which come recommended to my own mind by the consideration, that they were the ideas of an intimate and learned friend of mine, for whose opinion and sound judgment I must ever entertain the highest respect."† The author of the continuation of Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, after giving a summary of Swedenborg's doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement, remarks,—"In substance, perhaps, there is no great difference between this and the ordinary doctrine of the Trinity."

* Swedenborg did not profess to be the founder of any sect, nor do the receivers of his writings regard him as such; indeed, there is nothing to be found in his works upon the subject. The consequence is, that Swedenborgians, as they are improperly called, have not yet all formed themselves into a distinct body, but pursue each the guidance of his own conscience; some belonging to a distinct religious class, others remaining in external communion with the church of which they had previously been members; the fundamental article of their religion being love, not faith separate from love.

† This observation is extracted from a work, entitled, "Pure Evangelical Religion restored," by the late Rev. John Clowes, M. A., Rector of St. John's Church, Manchester, and, formerly, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge. In this tract an account is given of an interview between a clergyman and a bishop, on the subject of Swedenborg's writings, the names of the parties not being mentioned. It is known, however, that the clergyman was Mr. Clowes himself, and the bishop the late Dr. Porteus; Mr. Clowes' living being in the diocese of Chester, of which Dr. Porteus was then the bishop.

Your Grace also observes,—"Nor do I deny its including the fundamentals of Christianity;" indeed, so far from opposing the doctrines, a portion of Your Grace's argument is founded upon the presumption, of their being *essentially* in agreement with those of the Established Church.*

Whether or not such be the fact, we shall afterwards see; at present I only observe, that all who entertain tritheistical notions of the Trinity, have naturally felt great aversion to Swedenborg's views of the subject; and all who contemplate the Lord as one God, find their sentiments to be more in accordance with the doctrines of Swedenborg. Now it gives me great pleasure to see that Your Grace is one of this number. To no person in the present day, so far as I am aware, is the Christian community more indebted, for pointing out some of the lamentable errors, which have prevailed in regard to the doctrine of the Trinity; and I cannot help considering this to be one cause for which, whatever Your Grace may think of Swedenborg's revelations, you have taken so favorable a view of his doctrines; all of which are founded on that one great truth, that there is one God, that the Lord Jesus Christ is that God, and that in Him there is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Your Grace has, in your writings, maintained, what Swedenborg long since maintained, that the doctrine of the Trinity, as frequently interpreted, instead of being the manifestation, is, in fact, the mystification of the unity; and that the distinction of the persons had been so explained, as to make the unity of the Godhead inexplicable; in fine, that the unity had become the incomprehensible mystery. We know the reluctance of the human heart to acknowledge its errors; nor is that reluctance diminished by the circumstance of individuals forming into a body, as it then becomes the combined reluctance of all; in which case, an individual, in acknowledging his errors, has to acknowledge them not only as his own, but as those also of the body with which he is identified. Besides, the more widely spread and deeply rooted is an error, the less easily is it detected; and therefore, when Your Grace had discernment enough, and, what is still more estimable, the honesty and fidelity, to point out the errors regarding the Trinity, I cannot be surprised that many should be backward to perceive

* As the Essays, therefore, make no attempt to disprove the doctrinal views taken by Swedenborg, so it is to be understood that the remarks upon this subject, in the present letter, are designed rather as simple expositions of these views, than as formal proofs.

and acknowledge the fact,—a circumstance which only shews how irradicated the error had become. Of the truth of your assertion you gave a lamentable instance: my conviction is, Your Grace might have furnished hundreds. There is reason to believe it is an error which has overrun the Christian community. To introduce all the proofs of this fact, would be to make quotations which would fill a volume. I have thought it useful, however, to subjoin a few in the Appendix. Now, if the doctrine of the Trinity be a fundamental doctrine, if also we so regard it, it must, of course, enter, more or less, into every other doctrine of Christianity; it must, therefore, enter into that of the Atonement, which, after the Trinity, is next in importance; and if this doctrine of the Trinity enters into that of the Atonement, then must also our views of this doctrine. I take this for granted;—a universal truth must enter into all the particular truths under it. Consequently, if there be any tritheism in our views of the doctrine of the Trinity, we must carry it into the doctrine of the Atonement; and not only so, but this system of tritheism must be, more or less, the basis upon which our views of the Atonement are founded; and hence the doctrine of the Atonement will be, in a greater or less degree, a practical development and application of a system of tritheism. My Lord, I cannot but conceive that any one who first admits the fact, as you have candidly done, of an introduction of tritheism into the popular views of the Trinity, must necessarily admit this conclusion. It is a conclusion which is not adverted to in the Essays, although it appears necessarily to follow from what you have stated; but it is one which is openly advanced in the writings of Swedenborg, of which Your Grace says, that "you do not deny that they include the fundamentals of Christianity." Of these fundamentals the following is one extracted from the "Universal Theology," art. 132.

"It is a fundamental error of the church to believe the passion of the cross to be redemption itself; and this error, together with that relating to three divine persons from eternity, hath perverted the whole church, so that nothing spiritual is left remaining in it."

"What doctrine doth more abound in the books of the orthodox at this day, or what is more zealously taught and insisted on in the schools of divinity, or more constantly preached and cried up in the pulpit, than this,—that God the Father, being full of wrath against mankind, not only separated them from himself, but also sentenced them to uni-

versal damnation, thus excommunicated them from his favor; but because he was gracious and merciful, that he persuaded, or excited, his Son to descend, and take upon himself the determined curse, and thus expiate the wrath of his Father; and that thus, and no otherwise, could the Father be prevailed upon to look again with an eye of mercy on mankind? As also, that this was effected by the Son, who, in taking upon himself the curse pronounced against men, suffered himself to be scourged by the Jews, to be spit upon, and, lastly, to be crucified as the *accursed of God*, (Deut. xxi. 23;) and that the Father was by this means appeased, and, out of love towards his Son, cancelled the sentence of damnation, yet only in favor of those for whom the Son should intercede, who was thus to be a perpetual Mediator in the presence of the Father? These and the like doctrines are at this day trumpeted forth from the pulpit, and re-echoed from the walls of the temple, as sound is re-echoed in a wood, so that the ears of all present are filled with it. But who, that hath his reason enlightened and restored to health by the Word, cannot see that God is mercy and clemency itself, because he is love itself and goodness itself, and that these constitute his essence; and, consequently, that it is a contradiction to say, that mercy itself, or goodness itself, can behold man with an angry eye, and sentence him to damnation, and still abide in his own divine essence? Such dispositions are never ascribed to a good man or an angel of heaven, but only to a wicked man and spirit of hell; it is, therefore, blasphemy to ascribe them to God. But, if we inquire into the cause of this false judgment, we shall find it to be this, that men have mistaken the passion of the cross for redemption itself: hence have flowed those opinions, as falses flow in a continued series from one false principle; or, as from a cask of vinegar nothing but vinegar can come forth; or, as from an insane mind we can expect nothing but insanity. For one point being taken for granted, the conclusions that are made from it must be of the same family, because they are included in it, and are severally and successively produced from it: and from this one point concerning the passion of the cross, as constituting the sum of redemption, many more shocking and impious opinions, scandalous and disgraceful to God, may still take rise and go forth into the world, until that prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, where it is said, "The priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink,

they stumble in judgment; all tables are full of vomit and filthiness," (xxviii. 7, 8.)

"From this idea concerning God and redemption, the whole system of theology hath lost its spirituality, and is become in the lowest degree natural. This was the necessary consequence of ascribing to God merely natural properties and attributes; and yet on the idea entertained of God, and that of redemption, which makes one with salvation, every thing that hath relation to the church depends. For that idea is like the head, from which all parts of the body are derived; when, therefore, that idea is spiritual, every thing that belongeth to the church becometh spiritual also; but when that idea is natural, then every thing belonging to the church becomes natural. Now, forasmuch as the idea of God and of redemption is become merely natural, that is, sensual and corporeal, it follows that all those things are merely natural, which the heads and members of the church have maintained, and do maintain, in their systems and forms of doctrine. The reason why that idea must of necessity give birth to nothing but falses is, because the natural man is in continual opposition to the spiritual man, and thus regardeth spiritual things as airy and visionary phantasies. It may, therefore, be truly said, that, in consequence of that sensual idea concerning redemption, and thence concerning God, the ways toward heaven, which are those that lead to the Lord God the Savior, are beset with thieves and robbers, (John x. 1, 8, 9,) and that the doors of the temple are thrown down, so that dragons and owls, and the tzjim and jiim have entered, and made a concert of dreadful discord. That this idea concerning redemption, and concerning God, pervades the faith which prevails at this day throughout all Christendom, is an acknowledged truth; for that faith requires men to pray to God the Father, that he would remit their sins for the sake of the cross and blood of His Son; and to God the Son, that He would pray and intercede for them; and to God the Holy Ghost, that He would justify and sanctify them: and what is all this, but to supplicate three distinct Gods, one after another? And, in such a case, how can the notion which the mind forms of the divine government differ from that of an aristocratical or hierarchical government? or from that of the triumvirate which once existed at Rome, if only instead of a triumvirate it be called a triumpersonate? And in such a government, what is easier than for the devil to put in practice the old maxim, *divide and govern*? that is, to distract men's minds and ex-

cite rebellious motions, sometimes against one God, and sometimes against another, as hath been his practice since the time of Arius to this day; and thus to thrust the Lord God the Savior from His throne, "*who hath all power in heaven and in earth,*" (Matt. xxviii. 18,) and to exalt some creature of his own in His place, and to enjoin men to worship him, or, when the folly of this is detected, to destroy the worship of the Lord Himself together with that of the imaginary idol."

Since the time that Swedenborg wrote, there has been a great variety of modifications of these views; but, so far as I am aware, they all involve, among those who acknowledge the Lord's Divinity, the two principles which Swedenborg has laid down as fundamental errors,—that of the existence of three Divine Persons from eternity, and that of the passion of the cross as redemption and Atonement. Some consider satisfaction and expiation as the primary principles of the Atonement, making little or no mention of reconciliation. Others consider reconciliation to be the primary, regarding satisfaction and expiation as only its secondary features. These are they who, in general, view the Atonement not so much a pacification of the wrath of the Father, as a display of his justice; and hence, as a reconciliation not only of God to man, and of man to God, but of God to Himself; that is, of his attribute of justice to his attribute of love. Such views of the Atonement we consider to be untrue; not only in consequence of their involving the two fundamental errors above mentioned, but because we believe that the separation of the divine attributes neither does, nor ever did, take place in the Divine Being, but in man alone. When a person acknowledges the truth, but does not live according to it, there is then in his mind a separation of truth from love; hence, the truth that would otherwise save him then condemns; in which case, it is seen, when the conscience is awakened, with the aspect of a terrible justice, and excites in him the fear of an everlasting punishment; still, if his abhorrence of sin does not ultimately become an inward abhorrence of its sinfulness, as opposed to the Divine Nature, but arises only from a consideration of the punishment that has been inflicted upon another, and will be inflicted upon himself, he has no true idea of the nature of sin, or of the attributes of the Divine Being. The crucifixion of the Humanity, to which the Lord submitted, we regard not as arising *primarily* from the will of the Deity, but from that

of the devil. It was undergone, not for any purpose of reconciling one attribute of God to another, but only of reconciling the world to God; not for any purpose of exemplifying in the person of the Son, the justice of another person of the Father, but for the purpose of enduring those temptations which were necessary to victory over the powers of darkness, the glorification of the Humanity, and the consequent descent of the Holy Spirit; thus, with a view to rescue mankind from infernal influence, so as to enable them to exercise, what otherwise they could not, a free choice, and to be restored to a salvable state.

This view of the Atonement as a manifestation of the Divine love, not of wrath, or of justice in him separate from love, may be illustrated upon principles occasionally admitted even by some of our opponents. Thus in the *Horæ Solitariæ*, Mr. Serle remarks: "God is love, pure, perfect, and incorruptible love; but the carnal mind, the mind of every man by nature, the mind which is under the dominion of his flesh, and makes this flesh his only end, is corrupted, debased, and absorbed with enmity.". . . ."As he became opposite to the love of God, he became possessed with enmity; being contrary to the holiness of God, he was filled with sin; repugnant to the goodness of God, he was seized with evil; and cut off from the life of God, he inherited death, spiritual, temporal, and eternal. The Divine Nature could not be contaminated by, nor hold communion with, a sinful nature: and therefore there ensued a separation of God from man, which, having every dreadful consequence to the latter, is expressed by the wrath, abhorrence, vengeance, judgment, &c. of God,—terms adapted to the workings and capacities of the human mind, and used to mark out its entire alienation (with the sad effects of it) from its Maker. There is no wrath in God, as wrath, because He is wholly love; but his separation of man from the participation of his love, with all its various blessings, operates upon the human passions, now defiled with enmity, under the notions and impressions of anger and indignation. Thus God's love, being pure and unapproachable by sin, becomes a most dreadful and even horrible attribute to a sinner, because, as a sinner, he can never come nigh to God, never hold communion with him, nor receive delight or blessedness from him. And if divine wisdom had not found a method of reconciliation, human nature would and must have sustained whatever can be conceived under the awful idea of damnation, or the state of absolute rejection

from the presence of God. By these considerations it might appear, were it necessary to extend them, that enmity, sin, wrath, and misery, with other words of the like import, are all correlative terms, which only variously express the nature or effects of man's alienation from God," &c. "On the other hand, the word love is also correlative, and entirely connected with every other divine attribute and perfection, or with whatever may be called by those names: it has, and can have, no difference from them, however distinguished by a merciful condescension, for the better comprehension of our minds. Righteousness, for instance, is only a name for this love in act and exercise; for the love of God in its energies does only what is right or righteous. Love is the motive of all his actions, according to the Scriptures; and by communicating this love, he renders it the essential principle of all righteous action in man (John iii. 16; 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c.)* Truth, purity, and the like, are also but love in particular forms, actions, or aspects. In short, all the attributes and perfections of the Divine Nature have their essence in love, and the term love is but a glorious title for the grand assemblage of them, denominating (as the Bible hath) the first and supreme nature. God is love, then; uniting, as in that one attribute, all the other predicaments and glories of his majesty and goodness, not *per accidens*, but in essentiality; and with respect to his creatures, there is no grace nor act of righteousness but what is an emanation from the same principle, enlivening, invigorating, and making them happy." (See article, Love.) Hence it follows, that in God justice itself is only a form of love; to reconcile, therefore, justice to love, or love to justice, is to reconcile love to itself, a reconciliation which it never needed. Justice and love, therefore, were never separated in God, but were always one; and in this oneness consists the perfection of the Divine Nature. The Atonement, therefore, wrought by Jesus Christ, was the reconciliation, in his own person, of the Humanity to the Divinity, by which the Humanity became one with the Father, or the Divinity. This being effected, the Holy Spirit could descend and assist man in a corresponding work, the reconciliation of his humanity to that of the Lord Jesus Christ; a reconciliation which takes place by

* It is singular to observe how this author, after having made the foregoing excellent remarks, comes into collision with his own principles.

renouncing sin, overcoming evil, receiving the Divine Love and Wisdom into our nature, and thus being transformed into the image of Christ.

It will be seen, therefore, that the doctrine of the Atonement, as explained by Swedenborg, involves a view of the divine perfections fundamentally differing from those which are commonly received; the consequence is, that, as the waters of the fountain are different, so are all the streams which issue from it.* A false idea of God cannot consist with the worship of Him in spirit and in truth. "Upon a just idea of God," says Swedenborg, "is founded the universal heaven; and, upon earth, the universal church; and, in general, all religion; inasmuch as by such idea conjunction is effected; and by conjunction, light, wisdom, and eternal felicity." (Preface to the Apocalypse Revealed.) "The idea concerning God is the primary of all ideas; for, according to the quality thereof with man, such are his communication with heaven and conjunction with the Lord; and hence, such are his illustration, affection of truth and good, perception, intelligence, and wisdom; for these things are not from man, but from the Lord, according to conjunction with Him." (Apocalypse Explained, n. 957.) "A knowledge," says a modern writer, "of the mode in which God exists, is the foundation of all acceptable religious service. For without this knowledge, instead of worshipping the Deity as he really exists, we shall be in danger of worshipping a mere figment of our own imagination. And thus, while we suppose ourselves to be faithful servants of the alone true God, we may, effectively at

* Although the distinguished author of the Essays appears, in his various writings, to take *essentially the same* views of the Atonement with those which are commonly received, yet he seems to have avoided mentioning some of its most objectionable features. We repudiate, however, *in toto*, not the doctrine, but the generally received explanation of the doctrine. Mr. Law is very unsparing upon this subject. "What," observes he, "a paltry logic, to say, God is righteousness and justice as well as love, and therefore his love cannot help or forgive the sinner till his justice or righteous wrath has satisfaction? Every word here is in full ignorance of the things spoken of; for what is love in God, but his will to all goodness? What is righteousness in God, but his unchangeable love of his own goodness; his impossibility of loving any thing but it; his impossibility of suffering any thing that is unrighteous to have any communion with him? What is God's forgiving sinful man? It is nothing else in its whole nature, but God's making him righteous again. *There is no other forgiveness of sin but being made free from it.*" (Vol. I. No. 13.) It is justly remarked by Mr. Law, in other parts of his works, that as all attributes of the Creator are infinite, and all attributes of the creature finite; so if there be wrath in the Creator, it must be an infinite wrath, which is to make him infinitely worse than any man or devil.

least, be guilty of adoring an idol." (Faber's Apostolicity of Trinitarianism. *Introduction.*)

Now why have I introduced these observations? Simply to shew what are the doctrines of the Trinity and Atonement, popularly received, and what are those maintained by Swedenborg. For if it be the fact, that the two are not in coincidence, it will follow, that so much of the argument in the Essays, as is founded upon the supposition that they are practically the same, falls to the ground.

Not only, however, according to the popular views, is the Father divided in himself, by setting one attribute against another, but the Son is divided in himself, by possessing two substances; one human, the other divine; one created, the other uncreated; one finite, the other infinite. The subject is worthy of a few remarks.

Swedenborg explains how the names, Jesus and Christ, are names signifying a nature, that is to say, the Human nature assumed by Jehovah. What follows from this principle? That in the Christian church Christ is not worshipped, inasmuch as the Human nature is not worshipped; for the Human nature is generally considered not Divine. I say, not Divine; because, although most persons affirm that they do consider it Divine, inasmuch as it partakes of the Divine nature, yet it is obvious that, in calling the Human nature of Christ Divine, they use the term much in the same sense, as when they speak of a divine countenance, or divine music, or of the character of the Christian as divine, from his participation of the Divine nature; thus St. Peter says, "whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature." (Ep. 2, c. i, v. 4.) Hence, also, the author of the "Horæ Solitariæ" observes, "human life upon earth may be distinguished into three modes or conditions, natural, artificial, divine, or spiritual." Thus, although a person declares that he believes the Human nature of the Lord to be Divine, if he be asked whether it be infinite, the answer is, Decidedly not; for that this Human nature, notwithstanding it be called Divine, is still creaturely. Hence writers, in general, speak of the Human nature of the Lord as still finite; and if what is finite and created can be no object of divine worship, so neither can the Human or Christ-nature of Jehovah.

In proof of the assertion, that the Humanity of the Lord is still contemplated as creaturely, allow me to quote a few authorities. I might quote hundreds, if the limits of this

letter would allow me. Matthew Henry observes, "The glorified Humanity of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all the dignity and power conferred on it, was no more than a glorious creature." (Comment. 1 Cor. xv. 28.)—Dr. Owen observes, "That He (Jesus Christ) is still in the same Human nature wherein he was on the earth, that he hath the same rational soul, and the same body, is a fundamental article of the Christian faith. This nature of the man Christ Jesus, is filled with all the *divine* graces and perfections, *whereof a limited created nature is capable.* It is not deified; it is not made a God; it does not in heaven coalesce into one nature with the divine, by a composition of them; it has not any essential property of the Deity communicated to it, so as subjectively to reside in it; it is not made omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent; but it is exalted in *a fulness of all divine perfection!* ineffably above the glory of angels and men. It is incomprehensibly nearer God than they all; has communications from God in glorious light, love, and power, ineffably above them all—*but it is still a creature.*" (Glory of Christ, ch. vii.)—Your Grace, also, having observed, that "when we worship Christ, though we worship Him not as man, but as God," proceeds, a little subsequently,* as follows: (Essays, p. 168.) "When I say, however, that we worship Christ not as man, but as God, I mean only, that the worship which evidently the apostles and their immediate disciples paid, and were taught to pay, to Him, was not directed to a mere man, however high in the divine favor, but to God 'manifest in the flesh.' I am far from supposing that the generality of Christians, that is, the unlearned and unphilosophical, were, or can be, capable of making, in their worship, a complete mental separation of the two Natures, abstracting distinctly, and contemplating solely, the divine character, and laying aside all consideration of the Human Nature, of Christ. This may be possible for an acute, and learned, and reflective philosopher, without his adopting the notion into which the attempt seems to have led some of those early heretics, who regarded our Lord as *two Persons*,—the man, Jesus, and Christ, a distinct emanation of the Deity. The distinction, I say, it may be possible for a profound and reflective mind so to draw, as yet to keep clear of that heresy; but the bare

* The whole passage is far too long to be extracted, but as it is an important one, the reader is referred to the original. This is the only way in which *full* justice can be done, either to the Essays, or to the present argument.

description of such an abstractive process of thought, would, I conceive, have as much perplexed the greater part of the early disciples, as it manifestly would the generality of unlearned Christians now. The apostles and their hearers would have told us simply, that they addressed their prayers to a Being whom they regarded as both divine and human,—"the man Christ Jesus, in whom 'dwelleth' (not some emanation or portion of the Deity, but) '*all* the fulness of the Godhead, bodily.' They addressed Him in their worship by his human *name;* as, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,' &c. Nor could they, indeed, have *invoked* Him as their *Intercessor* and *Mediator*, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice, keeping out of their minds the Human Nature which those offices imply. And if such is the impression naturally produced in the generality of simple unphilosophical minds, it cannot be a *practically* incorrect one," &c. &c. &c. "The apostles do, indeed, direct our worship exclusively to God; but to 'God in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself:' nor do they dwell on the necessity of making, in our devotions, any mental separation of the two Natures of that Person who is the object of our worship. On the contrary, observe how, in the Epistle to the Colossians, Paul presents to our view the divine and the human attributes of the Savior almost simultaneously; 'in whom,' says he, 'we have redemption *through his blood*, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the Image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature (*πρωτότοκος πάσης κτίσεως*, born *before* all creatures,) for *by Him were all things created* that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible.' (Col. i. 14, 15, 16.)" To these observations, Your Grace, in accordance with the generally received views, adds the following remark:

"That the notions conveyed, by such expressions, to a plain reader, are *philosophically* correct, *I will not undertake to maintain:* it is sufficient that they are scriptural."

Now, to say nothing of a notion which it seems is not practically incorrect, but is so philosophically, I would observe, it appears that the apostle speaks of the Human nature as, in the strict sense of the term, Divine; that a simple unphilosophical mind would be disposed to form the same conception of it; that such a conception is, in point of fact, untrue; and that it is only *the acute, learned, and reflective philosopher, who is capable of making a complete mental separation of the two natures, abstracting distinctly*

and contemplating solely the divine character, and laying aside all consideration of the human nature, of Christ. From the authors first quoted, it likewise appears, that the humanity of Christ, is not, in the strict sense of the term, Divine. Your Grace, however, shews how the apostles did appear to consider it so; how the simple minded might be disposed to do the same; but you observe, that, philosophically, it is not correct; that is to say, although the expressions appearing to attribute Divinity to the Humanity may be scriptural, nevertheless, that the Humanity is, in the strict sense of the term, Divine, is not the fact. This, I believe, is no peculiar notion of Your Grace, but one which is generally considered orthodox. Now permit me to observe, that Swedenborg so far agrees with Your Grace as to admit, that the acute, learned, and reflective philosopher, is capable of making this distinction, or rather separation, between the Divine and Human natures; that this separation the apostles did not make, the simple-minded Christian cannot make, but the Church has made; and this, he maintains, has been the great source of all the mystery and confusion which have prevailed upon the subject. This is a vital point, and upon this question the whole system of Swedenborg stands or falls. That the infirm human nature which the Lord asssumed in the womb of the virgin, and which hungered, thirsted, was wearied, tempted, and put to death upon the cross, was Divine, Swedenborg does not admit; and in this, I presume, that he and Your Grace are both agreed. But there is one thing which forms a leading feature in his works, and which is wholly left out of the common system of divinity; I mean, the process by which that Human nature was sanctified, glorified, and thus united or made one with the Father. The Humanity, thus glorified, we consider to be the Humanity which Christ now has; and that this Humanity is, in the strictest sense, Divine, is the fundamental doctrine of the system of Swedenborg. Let us proceed to consider this question; and in so doing, although it may appear, from the mode of speaking of it, that the doctrine is only speculative and unconnected with practice, the result will shew that it involves the whole system of Christian life and conduct, and leads to a revolution in all our motives and moral sentiments.

In speaking of the Divinity of the Lord's Humanity, it is desirable that we have first clear ideas of what constitutes humanity or human nature. That by which we are distin-

guished as human beings, is the possession of a will and understanding; and the perfection of these consists in willing what is good, and understanding what is true; so that the more good we will, and the more truth we understand, the more are we truly human, and the more completely are we distinguished, as such, from the rest of the animal creation. If, therefore, it be good and truth which makes us human, then are these two the essential human principles; and in this point of view, to speak of an infinite humanity, is no other than to speak of infinite good and truth. Hence, to consider our Lord's humanity as finite, is to consider his goodness and truth as finite; and, since his goodness and truth are manifested only in his Word, it is to consider his Word as finite, that is to say, as possessing only a creaturely wisdom. Such, then, as are our views of the Lord's Humanity, such must be our views of his goodness and truth, or his Word; and such as are our views of his Word, such must be our views of his Humanity. When, however, we speak of an infinite humanity, or infinite goodness and truth, we speak in reference to what is interior; for God is not called infinite in reference to space, but in reference to interiority, that is to say, purity. Hence, when we speak of infinity of wisdom, we do not speak in regard to quantity, but to quality; that is to say, interiority and purity. The more interior is our wisdom, the more do we see of the internality or infinity of the divine wisdom; the purer we are, the more do we see of the divine purity; the more spiritual we are, the more do we see of the divine spirituality. To attempt to contemplate God, therefore, out of his Humanity,* is to attempt to contemplate Him

* Dr. Hey, formerly Divinity Lecturer of Cambridge, amongst other remarks with regard to Swedenborg in his lectures, makes the following: "In the summary of the doctrines of Swedenborg, we find this account of the Trinity. There is a Divine Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or, in other words, of the all-begetting Divinity, the Divine Humanity, and the Divine Proceeding or Operation, and that this Trinity consisteth not, therefore, of three distinct persons, but is united as soul, body, and operation in man, in the one person of the Lord Jesus Christ, who, therefore, is the God of heaven, and alone to be worshipped, being Creator from eternity, Redeemer in time, and Regenerator to eternity. I mention this notion chiefly on account of its making the Father no object of our worship, and dropping also all worship to the Holy Ghost." Book IV. art 1. sect. 6. In reply to this it may be observed, St. Paul says, God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, that is, as we interpret the expression, the Father was in the Son, reconciling the world unto himself. Now, if a person worships Christ, I suppose he worships God in Christ: for were God not in Christ, Christ could not be an object of divine worship. Suppose now I were to say, that in this case, a person worshipping Christ does not worship God, or because he worshipped God in Christ alone, he did not contem-

out of his goodness and truth; for goodness and truth are the essential human principles, or the Humanity, of which the outward body is but the ultimate form; and since the Word of God is a revelation of his goodness and truth, to attempt to contemplate God out of his Humanity, is to attempt to contemplate him out of his Word, or independently of any revelation he has made of Himself; and to think we thus can know Him, is as absurd as to think we can climb up into heaven by some other way than the one which He has opened. The Divinity, considered independently of the Humanity, transcends all possible thought of angels and of men; it has no conceivable distinctions, hence no conceivable attributes or perfections. It is, therefore, in the Humanity alone, that the Divinity has any relation to us, and through the medium of that Humanity alone, that we can approach to the Divinity; which Humanity is, therefore, our mediator; hence we can speak of God's love, truth, mercy, wisdom, and so forth, all of which perfections evidently exhibit the human character and nature. Goodness and truth, therefore, being the essential human principles, of which the body is but the ultimate or corporeal form, it follows that, as the Lord alone is essential goodness and truth, He alone is truly Man,* and that human beings become men, or human, only in proportion as they receive

plate God as an object of worship; would this be considered a just conclusion? Now, as God is in Christ, so the Father is in the Son; we could not worship the Son if the Father were not in Him; it is because the Father is in the Son that we worship the Son, knowing that, in thus worshipping the Son, we worship the Father also, nay that we cannot worship the Father in any other way; for we know nothing of the Father out of the Son, therefore, we cannot worship the Father out of the Son. They rather make the Father no object of divine worship, who think to worship him out of the Son;—for as out of the Son we can know nothing of Him, so to worship that of which we know nothing, is to worship we know not what, which is in fact no worship at all. We, therefore, worship Christ alone, because it is in Christ alone that the Father is, or in whom is all fulness of the Godhead bodily. It is the attempt to produce division in the Godhead, and hence a divided worship, that has produced division in the church. If, in the way in which it is generally understood, God be three, how can the church be one? If there be a divided Godhead, how can there be an undivided church?

* As it is not my design to enter upon this subject any farther than is connected with the argument in the Essays, the reader is referred, for a more full explanation of it, to the writings of Swedenborg. At the same time, to guard against misapprehension, it may be well to observe, that, as the Divinity never was known except through the medium of a Humanity, so the Humanity with which He is now clothed, is a Humanity in ultimates, or in a lower degree than was possessed by the Lord before He came into the world, and assumed a body in the womb of the virgin; it being only through the medium of this lower degree, or Divine Humanity in ultimates, that the Divinity can now be approached.

of His nature. Hence it is the doctrine of Swedenborg, that the Lord alone is a perfect Man, or that His Divinity alone is perfectly Human, or, again, that that only is perfectly human which is infinite. We cannot, therefore, know God as He is in Himself, but we can know Him as He is in His Humanity; and since He has a Divine or Infinite Humanity, and we a humanity finite and creaturely, therefore there is a relation of analogy established between the two; but there is no traceable analogy between our finite humanity and His Divinity independently of His Humanity, because that Divinity is antecedent to any relation to the creature, being sole, supreme, and independent.

It is from not attending to this circumstance, that some appear to have fallen into error upon the subject of analogy. From not having any just idea of a Divine Humanity, they think that, in contemplating God, they must contemplate the Divinity independently of the Humanity; hence they think that there is no analogy between the perfections of the Almighty and the attributes of human nature, and, consequently, that, know what we may of Him, we, after all, know nothing. No wonder, for the reasons we have stated, they should come to this conclusion; for, in consequence of separating the Divine Nature from the Human, they have only indefinite ideas of the Divinity; and, in consequence of separating the Human from the Divine, they contemplate the Human only as creaturely, and therefore, either, as in the former case, know nothing whatever of God, or else, as in the latter, consider Him to be such a one as themselves; that is to say, their theology is either a system of self-originated abstract reasonings, or of natural, carnal, and sensual ideas. The truth of this circumstance we may see exemplified in those speculations which have gone under the name of profound philosophy; and the system of naturalism, which has often become current under the name of the plain and practical doctrines of Christianity. Thus we find the Christian community divided into two classes, one understanding the doctrines of Christianity in the lowest and most carnal manner, in which case they see little or no mystery in them; while the more educated and reflecting, perceiving the impossibility of such things, confess they have no clear notions upon the subject, and, in fine, that *nearly* the whole is unintelligible. Hence, the Doctrines of the Trinity, Atonement, Satisfaction, Intercession, and Mediation, &c., are, one after the other, proclaimed to be mysteries inscrutable, and the truth,

which was intended to be the light of the soul, is contemplated as abyssal darkness; the pious few awaiting the period when God in His mercy may vouchsafe a clearer revelation.

If the Human nature be the only medium through which we can have any idea of the Deity, it follows, that if that Human nature be finite and creaturely, our ideas of God must be of Him as a finite creaturely being, far above all angels it may be, but still finite and creaturely; as such, we must conceive Him as possessed of a nature the same with our own, and worship a being like ourselves; the consequence will be the imitation of an imperfect model, comparatively low ideas of the Divine perfections, a comparatively low standard of religion or of life and conduct, and hence, a degenerated church. This it is which Swedenborg maintains to be the key to the present state of the Christian community, "they know not the thoughts of the Lord, neither understand they his counsel." True it is, that, as Swedenborg observes, (Apocalypse Explained, 649,) "At the end of the church the Lord is indeed preached, and, also from doctrine, Divinity is attributed to him, like to the Divinity of the Father; but, notwithstanding, scarce any one thinks of His Divinity, by reason of their placing it above or without His Humanity; wherefore, when they look to His Divinity, they do not look to the Lord, but to the Father, as to another; when, notwithstanding, the Divinity, which is called the Father, is in the Lord, as He Himself teacheth in John x. 30, 38; xiv. 7. Hence it is, that man doth not think of the Lord otherwise than as of a common man, and from that thought flows his faith; howsoever he may say with his lips that he believeth His Divinity. Let any one explore, if he can, the idea of his thought concerning the Lord, whether it be not such as is here described; and when it is such, he cannot be conjoined to Him in faith and love, nor, by any conjunction, receive any good of love and truth of faith. Hence then it is, that in the end of the church there is not any acknowledgment of the Lord, that is, of the Divine (principle) in the Lord and from the Lord. It appears, indeed, as if the Divine (principle) of the Lord was acknowledged, because it is affirmed in the doctrine of the church; but whilst the Divine (principle) is separated from His Human, His Divine (principle) is not yet acknowledged inwardly, but only outwardly; and to acknowledge it outwardly, is to acknowledge it only with the mouth and not in the heart,

or with speech only and not in faith."—Now the Humanity of the Lord being infinite, and our Human nature being finite, it is clear that, as finite beings can never have adequate ideas of what is infinite, so we can never have adequate ideas of the Lord's Humanity. Still, our ideas, though finite, may, as we have said, be true, being founded on a real analogy between the Humanity of the creature and that of the Creator. Consequently, our knowledge of God may be as certain, as it is certain we may be an image and likeness of God; for, in regard to Divine Wisdom, we have the faculty of receiving only that which we have the faculty of being, and no further. Though our finite affections and thoughts, therefore, can never be adequate to the Love and Wisdom of The Infinite, any more than we can be infinite, yet The Infinite may be in them, making them so many finite likenesses and images of Himself. Nevertheless, He is not in us in the fulness of the Godhead bodily, or in the fulness of his glorious person; but that which is in us, is the Holy Spirit proceeding from Him, and which, in coming down to our souls, is adapted to them, just as the heat and light of the sun, in passing through the atmospheres, become finally accommodated to each created object, according to its nature and requirements. Thus it is, the spirit of man stands in the same relation to the Sun of Righteousness, in which the body of man stands to the outward and visible sun. Thus also it is, man walks between two great lights, the one to enlighten his body, the other, if he pleases, to enlighten his soul.

Although all the authors with which I am acquainted, consider the Humanity of the Lord to be finite and creaturely, yet, some of the learned and pious appear to have seen obscurely the possibility of an infinite or Divine Humanity. Thus Hooker, Eccles. Pol. Book 5, after repeatedly speaking of Christ as a creature, makes the following observation: "Touching the manner how he worketh as man in all things, the principal powers of the soul of man are the will and understanding, the one of which two in Christ assenteth unto all things, and from the other nothing which Deity doth work is hid; so that, by knowledge and assent, the soul of Christ is present with all things which the Deity of Christ worketh. And even the body of Christ itself, although the definite limitation thereof be most sensible, doth, notwithstanding, admit, in some sort, a kind of infinite and unlimited presence likewise;" the nature of which the pious and learned author proceeds

afterward in his own way to explain. There are others who affirm that Christ had a kind of Humanity before he came upon earth; and although they do not appear to have any distinct idea of what they mean, yet the very admission tacitly implies an infinity in the Humanity, unless they consider Christ as a creature before he came upon earth, which, it is presumed, most persons would not do. Besides, the sacrament of the Lord's supper might itself be considered a symbol of some kind of presence of the body and blood of Christ, that is to say, of his Humanity; and this itself might shew us the possibility of an omnipresent, infinite, or Divine Humanity.

Now, why have I entered into this subject? Because, if the Humanity of the Lord be Divine, if it be God, what becomes of the modern system of popular theology? "An absolutely perfect creature," says Archbishop King, "implies a contradiction. For it would be of itself and not of itself at the same time. Absolute perfection is, therefore, peculiar to God, and if he should communicate his own peculiar perfection to another, *that other would be God*," (Origin of Evil, Chap. 3.) We cannot consider, then, the Humanity, as some appear to do confusedly, both as finite and infinite: it is either one, or the other: it is either Divine or not Divine: it is either an object of worship, or it is not an object of worship. If it be an object of worship, then we address our prayers to Christ alone, that is, to the Divine Humanity alone, because in that Humanity alone can the Divinity or Jehovah be approached, this Humanity being the manifestation of all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Hence, all those carnal notions of Mediation and Intercession, popularly entertained, we reject, as unworthy of the Deity and unfounded in Scripture; it being obvious, from the admission made in the Essays, that the separation between the Divine and Human natures of the Lord, the apostles did not make, the simple-minded Christian could not make, but the acute, learned, and reflective philosopher has made.* Nevertheless, allow me to

* Some of the practical evils mentioned by Swedenborg as resulting from not considering the Lord's Human nature Divine, are the following:—

1. Ignorance of God among the learned, who contemplate the Divine nature out of the Human.

2. Ignorance of God among the unlearned and sensual; because they contemplate the Human nature out of the Divine; and so, by considering Christ as a creature and yet God, degrade the Divine Being to the level of a creature, or to one like themselves.

express my conviction, that much of what Your Grace has said upon the subject, is worthy of a truly enlightened mind, and deserves the profound attention of every member of the Church of Christ. I refer more particularly to the following passage in Your Grace's sermon on the Name of Emmanuel.

"There are, indeed, very few Christian prayers expressly recorded in Scripture; but from those few, it should seem that our Lord's disciples understood his injunction to them, to *pray to the Father in His name*, as meaning that they were to *address their prayers directly to Christ*, and pray to God *in* Him. This, indeed, if you consider what has been said on the use of the word *name*, is what we might naturally have supposed *would* be their interpretation of the command to ask of God in Christ's name; *i. e.* of God as manifested in Christ for the redemption of the world. And the few instances that *are* recorded, go to confirm this. Keeping in mind that the title of 'Lord,' or 'the Lord,' is that which the Christians constantly applied to Jesus Christ, look at the prayer recorded in the beginning of Acts, where they apply to Him who had, in person, chosen each of the apostles, to fill up for Himself the number left deficient by the apostacy of Judas. They do not say, '*Our Father, we pray thee, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to fill up the number of his apostles,*' *but they apply themselves to Him direct, saying*, '*Thou Lord! who knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen.*' Again, look to the dying prayers of the blessed martyr, Stephen, whose birthday to immortal life we celebrate tomorrow. His prayers are an evident imitation of those of

3. A consequent tendency in some to unbelief in God, arising from an ignorance of his nature.

4. The support of the Papacy, because when Christ is considered a creature, and nevertheless invested with Divine attributes, it is less repulsive to the mind to consider another creature (as the Pope for instance) to be invested with Divine power.

5. The worship of angels, because if one creature may be worshipped, another may.

6. An unbelief in angels, or any intercourse with another world; because the Divine when contemplated out of the Human is no object of thought or love, hence, virtually, a nonentity; consequently, also, heaven and hell.

7. Intercession of angels and saints; because, if one creature may intercede, another may. I will here add, that after once communicating to a Roman Catholic the true idea of Christ's intercession, as explained by Swedenborg, and so removing the common idea of its nature, he at once saw the folly of his belief in the intercession of the Virgin Mary, and the saints; the consequence of which was, he, of his own accord, renounced the whole doctrine, and addressed himself to the Lord alone.

his crucified Master. Yet *he does not use the same invocation of Father, but addresses himself direct to Christ.* Our Lord had said, when his enemies were nailing him to the cross, '*Father*, forgive them, for they know not what they do;' and again, when about to expire, '*Father*, into thy hands I commend my spirit.' Stephen, in manifest imitation of him, says, '*Lord*, lay not this sin to their charge;' and, again, '*Lord Jesus*, receive my spirit.' It is plain that these persons, if they designed at all, as they surely did, to obey the injunction of praying to the Father in Christ's *name*, must have supposed themselves to be conforming to it, by *praying immediately to Christ.* It would perhaps be too much to assert positively, that they prayed usually in this form, and seldom in any other; but it is plain that, according to their views, such *might* have been their usual practice; and, I believe, not above* one instance of a departure from it is recorded. It is remarkable, too, that of the same character is the oldest, or one of the oldest, of all the prayers for general use, that have come down to us composed by an uninspired Christian; that of the celebrated Chrysostom, retained in our service. It is addressed to Christ Himself, with the title of 'Almighty God,' and with an allusion to his promise, to be present in the midst of his disciples, and that they should obtain what they should agree to ask, in a common or joint supplication, when assembled in his name—'Almighty God, who hast given us grace at this time, with one accord to make our common supplications unto thee, and dost promise, that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, thou wilt grant their request; fulfil now, O Lord, the desires and petitions of thy servants, as may be most expedient for them; granting us in this world knowledge of thy truth, and in the world to come life everlasting.' "

If this be true, what becomes of the phraseology with which prayers in general are opened and terminated? what becomes of our addresses to the Father, beseeching him to listen to the prayers of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to receive us for His sake? what becomes of the popular notions

* "The only instance, as far as I recollect, recorded of the employment, by the apostles, of any other mode of address to God, is that which occurred after Peter and John had been brought before the Jewish rulers, when they had healed the cripple at the temple gate. The occurrence suggests to the assembly the words of the Psalm: 'The rulers took counsel together against the Lord, and against his Christ' (or Anointed.) And it appears as if they were thence led to speak of Jesus Christ in the third person, in their prayer on the only recorded occasion in which they do so."

of Christ, as an Advocate, pleading His merits to the Father, and interceding with Him, for the sake of these merits, to send the third person of the Holy Spirit? That Christ is an Intercessor, that he is a Mediator, that he is an Advocate, we have the authority of Scripture; but we do not consider that we have any such authority for those earthly ideas, which are commonly entertained upon this subject. That Scripture accommodates itself to the apprehension of the simple; and hence, that its expressions are not always to be taken in their most literal sense, there are few who will not admit. Man having become a creature of the senses, it was necessary to address him through the medium of the senses. In teaching a child, we are obliged to convey our instructions in a similar manner. We may speak to the child of the sun rising and setting; nor are we thus perverting its mind, because it is not yet able to exercise the powers of reason. But if, when the child becomes a man, we teach its *reason* that the sun moves round the earth; and if, upon this principle, we build a whole system of natural philosophy, are we not then perverting the mind of our pupil, and turning an innocent, useful, and even necessary mode of instruction, into a means of falsification of the laws of nature? In the same manner, the doctrine of Mediation and Intercession, as commonly understood, is regarded by Swedenborg as a perversion of the truth. Inasmuch, however, as the darkness occasioned by the absence of true light, is far less deplorable than that which is occasioned by the presence of a false one, there is no doubt that the acknowledgment of ignorance, in regard to the great doctrines of Christianity, is more becoming a pious and humble mind, than those bold expositions which only indicate the intrusion of the natural man behind the veil of the temple, or his attempt to approach Jehovah, without taking his shoes from off his feet. What, then, is the practical idea of the Lord's Intercession and Mediation, as explained by Swedenborg? Let us hear what he says:

"They who believe that there are three persons who constitute the Divine (being,) and are together called one God, from the sense of the letter of the Word derive no other idea concerning Mediation and Intercession, than, that the Lord sits at the right hand of His Father, and discourses with Him as man with man, and brings the supplications of men to the Father, and entreats that for His sake, because He endured the cross for the human race,

He would pardon them, and be merciful; such is the idea concerning Intercession and Mediation, which the simple derive from the sense of the letter of the Word. But it is to be noted, that the sense of the letter is according to the apprehension of simple men, that they may be introduced into interior truths themselves; for the simple cannot form any other idea of the heavenly kingdom, than as of an earthly kingdom; nor any other idea of the Father, than as of a king on earth; and of the Lord, than as of the son of a king, who is heir of the kingdom. That the simple have such an idea, is very manifest from the idea of the Lord's apostles themselves concerning His kingdom; for at first they believed, like the rest of the Jews, that the Lord, as being the Messiah, would be the greatest king upon earth, and would raise them to a height of glory above all nations and people on the universal globe. But when they heard from the Lord Himself, that His kingdom was not on earth, but in heaven; then neither could they think any other than that His kingdom in heaven was to be altogether as a kingdom on earth; wherefore also James and John asked, that in His kingdom one might sit on the right hand, and the other on the left; and the rest of the apostles, who were also willing to become great in that kingdom, had indignation, and disputed among themselves which of them should be greatest there; and whereas such an idea was inherent in them and could not be extirpated, the Lord also said to them that they should sit on twelve thrones, to judge the twelve tribes of Israel; on which occasion, what was meant of the Lord by twelve thrones, by twelve tribes, and by judgment, they knew not. From these considerations now, it may be manifest what, and whence, is the common idea concerning the Lord's mediation and intercession with the Father. But he who knows the interior things of the Word hath altogether another notion concerning the Lord's mediation, and concerning his intercession, viz: that he doth not intercede as a son with a father, a king on earth, but as the Lord of the universe with Himself,* and as God from Himself; for the

* The Humanity is the body, the Divinity the soul; the soul assumes the body, in order that, through this intermediation or intercession, it may become visible to the creature, and hold communion with it, just as the soul of man is enabled to hold communion with its fellow creatures on earth, through the mediation or intercession of the body. The soul and the body are not two persons, but one; in like manner the Humanity is not a separate person from the Divinity, still it is the Humanity which intercedes.

Father and He are not two, but are one, as Himself teaches. (John xiv. 8—11.) The reason why he is called Mediator and Intercessor, is, because by the Son is meant Divine Truth, and by the Father Divine Good, and mediation is effected by Divine Truth, for by it is given access to Divine Good: for Divine Good cannot be acceded to (or approached,) because it is as the fire of the sun; but Divine Truth can be acceded to, because this is as light thence derived, which gives passage and access to man's sight, which is grounded in faith. Hence it may be manifest, what is to be understood by Mediation and Intercession. It may be expedient, further, to say from what ground it is, that the Lord himself, who is the Divine Good itself and the sun itself of heaven, is called a Mediator and Intercessor with the Father. The Lord, when He was in the world, before that He was fully glorified, was Divine Truth; wherefore at that time there was Mediation, and He interceded with the Father, that is, with the Divine Good itself, (John xiv. 16, 17; xvii. 9, 15, 17;) but after that He was glorified as to the Human (principle,) then he is called Mediator and Intercessor from *this* ground, because no one can think of the Divine (being) Himself, unless he forms to himself the idea of a Divine Man, still less can any one be conjoined by love to the Divine (being) Himself, except by such an idea. If any one, without the idea of a Divine Man, thinks of the Divine (being) Himself, he thinks indeterminately, and an indeterminate idea is no idea; or he conceives an idea of the Divine (being) from the visible universe, without an end, or with an end in what is obscure, which idea conjoins itself with the idea of the worshippers of nature; it also falls into nature, and thereby becomes no idea. Hence it is evident, that there would not be any conjunction with the Divine (being) by faith nor by love. All conjunction requires an object, and the conjunction effected is according to the quality of the object; hence it is that the Lord, as to the Divine Human (principle,) is called a Mediator and Intercessor, but mediates and intercedes with Himself. That the Divine (principle) Itself cannot be apprehended by any idea, is manifest from the Lord's words in John: 'No one hath seen God at any time; the Only Begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath brought Him forth to view,' (i. 18;) and again, 'ye have neither heard the voice of the Father at any time, nor seen his appearance,' (v. 37.) Nevertheless, it is remarkable, that all who think from

themselves, or from the flesh, concerning God, think of Him indeterminately, that is, without any determinate idea; whereas, they who think of God not from themselves, nor from the flesh, but from the spirit, think of Him determinately, that is, present to themselves an idea of the Divine (being or principle) under a human appearance," &c. (Arcana Cœlestia, 6705.)

Such being Swedenborg's views of the Trinity, Atonement, Mediation, and Intercession, we now proceed to a brief notice of his doctrine of Regeneration. It is a common remark by some divines, that we have nothing to do with the manner in which Jesus Christ effected the Atonement; that we are as little concerned with the manner how Regeneration is effected; that all that we are required to believe is, that the Atonement is effected, that the Holy Spirit, some how or other, does regenerate the soul; but that both the Atonement and Regeneration are, in themselves, inscrutable mysteries. Now it is certain, that the manner how a thing is done, is often the most important part of our knowledge relating to it, more especially when we are called upon to bear our part in the work. Suppose, then, a person were required to co-operate in the work of his regeneration, would it be a matter of no importance to him, to know how the work was effected? Certainly, if he had nothing to do with it, any inquiry upon the subject might be considered to originate in folly and presumption, since it could not serve any practical purpose; but where we lay it down as a first principle, that certain doctrines, which others consider we have no concern with, except simply to believe, are vitally connected with our motives and moral conduct, it is not difficult to see, that some inquiry into the nature and manner how of the divine operations, so far as they are connected with these doctrines, is not made with a view to speculative but to practical purposes. In such a case, we cannot consider those who make the inquiry as the speculators, but those who first have deprived the doctrine of its practical tendencies; who having evaporated it into a mere speculation, complain that all who employ themselves in understanding it, are wasting their time in a useless pursuit. What can be a more complete admission on their part, that the doctrines of Christianity, as they receive them, have little or no intelligible reference to practice? I would, however, that this were all; that such views of Christian doctrine, or rather such darkness visible, produced no ill effect upon human con-

duct: but, alas! I fear they either proportionably give rise to fanaticism, by keeping the understanding in the dark, and appealing only to the feelings, or else lead a man to a careless unconcern with regard to truths, into which he is told it is presumptuous to inquire, which he cannot understand, and which, even if he could, have no relation to his life or actions.

In contradistinction to such views we would observe, that since the Atonement wrought by Jesus Christ was, as we believe, no other than the reconciliation of the Human nature to the Divine, so this reconciliation was a progressive work, which was finally completed by the passion of the cross. Jesus Christ is our great archetype, our great exemplar, whom we are to follow; we are, therefore, called upon to work, in ourselves, the same kind of work in our human nature, which He wrought in His;—He after an infinite, we after a finite, manner. Hence his glorification is the exemplar, as well as the efficient cause of our regeneration: but how can we follow him in the performance of the work, if we know not what the work is, nor how it is to be done? The way in which a thing is done, or the mode of doing it, means only the causes employed in effecting it; and how can we produce the effect, unless we know how to make use of the causes by which it is effected? Must not the whole process be involved in inscrutable mystery, and if we attempt to define it, must not the definition be as obscure as the thing defined? Why need we wonder, then, that some divines should describe regeneration partly as follows:—"a new principle of spiritual life, consigned over to the soul by a mysterious operation of the Holy Ghost, which we can neither describe in words, nor discern by its effects"—"a pure act of God's special grace, immanent in himself, and terminating in man, limited and determined to a particular time, and incapable of latitude and increase, consisting of the forgiveness of sin; the gift or earnest, or covenanted consignation, of the influence of the Holy Ghost, considered independently of its moral operations and legitimate effects, and a title to eternal life, depending on the performance of certain stipulated conditions," &c. &c. The fact is, that, in consequence of the introduction of erroneous principles, the truth of which is taken for granted, the whole doctrine of Christianity appears to have become mystified, and its power proportionally paralyzed. Men cannot be stimulated to action by that of which they have no idea. It may try the faith they

possess, but will never impart to them a degree which they do not possess; their minds never can be enlightened by unintelligible mysteries. It must be obvious, then, that the doctrine of Regeneration, as explained by Swedenborg, is fundamentally different from the one which is commonly received, because it is founded on the process of the glorification of the Lord's Humanity, or that by which His Humanity became Divine—a doctrine not only not understood in the present day, but denied; the consequence is, there is scarcely one single feature common to the two views of Regeneration. The nature of the Lord's Humanity is frequently considered to be a speculative subject, as indeed it well may be, if we see not its relation to Christian practice. But when we inquire into the process by which this infirm Humanity was glorified, we are not satisfied with merely making the inquiry, and regarding the result as a speculative truth; we instantly apply it to the practical purposes of regeneration—the regeneration of our whole being, hence of all our conduct, and of all the motives and moral sentiments which we had previously imbibed from the theology of the day. The common idea with regard to Regeneration, is, that it signifies re-birth, or being born again, and that, as a man can be naturally born but once, so he can be spiritually born but once; the consequence is, that Regeneration, whether supposed to take place at baptism, or in subsequent life, is considered to be a simple or single act, "incapable of latitude or increase." This error arises, as we conceive, like all others in theology, from a spiritual truth being naturalized, or degraded to the level of the merely natural mind. For, though a man can be born but once naturally, and hence also naturally can die but once; yet, because the body can die but once, it does not hence follow that the soul can die but once. The life of the natural body is but of one nature, which never ascends beyond that which it originally was; it can never be elevated out of itself into a life of a higher order, for animal or corporeal life is but one; and hence the body is but once born, comes to but one perfection, and dies but one death. The case is altogether different with the life of the spirit, which, while we are living in this world, may be elevated out of its plane or level, into another that is higher, and this unceasingly. Every sinful habit to which the soul dies is the occasion of a distinct death; and it may have to die as many deaths as it has sins unto which it must die. The same is true with regard to the evils in-

herited by birth before they descend into ultimate acts. As every evil has its own life in the soul, so also, in being destroyed, it must undergo its own death; hence the soul may die daily; and as it may die daily, so, in a corresponding sense, it may be said to be born daily; hence, as there may be a perpetual death, so may there be also a perpetual birth, hence a perpetual generation, and hence a perpetual regeneration. This state of generation and regeneration is the eternal spring of the soul; and hence we see the true reason for which, to angelic beings, heaven is a season of perpetual spring. Besides, it is to be remembered, that we cannot but affix to the term regeneration a sense more enlarged than the one it commonly bears, and which appears to be its more immediate sense; for, properly speaking, it does not signify re-*birth*, but re-*generation*, re-*begetting*, or re-*production*. Now, as all the processes of growth which take place in a plant or animal, may be said to be processes of generation, in the more enlarged sense of that term, so every progression of the soul in spiritual life, we consider to be a process of generation; hence spiritual affections and thoughts are the result of spiritual generation, and the way to purify or exalt their nature is by a perpetual process of regeneration. This is no merely speculative or metaphysical doctrine, for it necessarily originates this practical truth, that evil is not removed from the soul in an instant, as filth is washed from the body; evil can be removed only by a death, and good can be received only by its being generated within us; hence there is no such thing as righteousness being imputed without being imparted, and the popular doctrine of Justification by Faith, is one which we consider to be contrary to God's Word, and contradictory to the real nature and constitution of things. Though all tradition should maintain that the tree of the knowledge of good and evil might be considered as possessing the same nature with the tree of life, by having the nature of the latter imputed without being imparted, we must beg leave to withhold our assent; and if *this* doctrine of Justification by Faith be the article of a standing or falling church, we can make no question to which of the two it belongs. If imputation be salvation, there is not a fallen spirit but might enter into heaven.

Now, if the doctrines of Christianity be practical, if they furnish us with principles of action, then any alteration in these doctrines implies a corresponding alteration in our

conduct, motives, and moral sentiments. For I presume Your Grace will not admit, that the doctrines of Christianity have no relation whatever to Christian life, and that, consequently, we may adopt any we please, without their affecting in any manner our spiritual state; yet this admission the reader cannot but conclude that Your Grace must make, if it be insisted on, that, in receiving the *system* of Swedenborg, a man is not called upon to alter his conduct, his motives, or his moral sentiments. This, my Lord, will be still more demonstrable in the sequel, whatever be the meaning attached in the Essays to the term system; for certain it is, that Swedenborg's doctrines form as peculiar a feature of his *system*, as his revelations, these revelations being, for the most part, a further development of his doctrines. To enter farther into the nature of the Christian doctrines as explained by Swedenborg, would be to fill a volume; as however we have now very briefly adverted to some of the most important, I must leave the reader to conclude with regard to the rest; and to determine whether, so far as regards the principles we have been considering, they are the same with those of what is called the Church catholic, or whether it be not true, as Swedenborg says, "The reason why the faith of the New Church cannot, by any means, be together with the faith of the former or present church, is, because they do not agree together in the one third, no, nor even in the one tenth part." (Brief Exposition. Section 24.)

By what we conceive to be a happy inconsistency in the Christian community, we are enabled with pleasure to point out sentiments occasionally prevailing among its numbers, in perfect accordance with some of those to which we have been adverting. It is one consolation to the Church to know, that the hour of midnight is the hour in which the new day commences. Hence we are thankful to behold around us the dawn of better things; and though the light is but dim, wherever we behold its beams, we rejoice with exceeding great joy.

Before concluding this part of the subject, we may observe, that there is a class of divines who openly deny that the practical tendency of a doctrine (such as Your Grace has chosen for testing the truth of the revelations of Swedenborg, and such as we are willing to abide by,) is a true or proper test of Christian doctrine. They question the safety of their own speculations, upon this principle, as well they might; they naturally object, that, upon this

ground, (and I quote the words of one of them,) "those doctrines in which it is less easy to discern any such practical tendency are comparatively disregarded." The doctrine of the Tripersonality,* for instance, is one of those in which it is not so easy to discern any practical tendency; hence, upon the foregoing principle, it must be comparatively disregarded; yet it is generally admitted to be a fundamental doctrine. Here, then, we see the illustration of what was stated at the commencement, that at least certain of the doctrines of Christianity, as commonly received, are admitted to have either in whole, or in part, no intelligible reference to practice. Here we see that not Swedenborg, but his opponents, are the speculators, they themselves avowing, that many of the doctrines of Christianity, as they interpret them, are, in a greater or less degree, speculative; that it is dangerous to their views to be tried by the test imposed in Your Grace's Essays; and that it is one of our errors to submit to it—a test, nevertheless, by which we desire to abide, and by which many of our opponents refuse to abide—being aware of the consequences. Now the error, we presume, does not lie with those, who, finding it to be no easy thing to discern in a doctrine its practical tendency, are inclined to attach to it, in relation to themselves, a secondary importance; but with those, who, in their original conception of the doctrine, have separated it from practice; and when they have this done, and found that it is shorn of its practical tendency and reduced to a speculation, resort to tradition for the purpose of attaching to it an extrinsic value, in the place of the intrinsic value of which they have deprived it; in fine, who, as we conscientiously believe, having undermined the temple, seek to prop it up by external supports. For what is the practical tendency of a doctrine? Is it not its tendency to remove evil, and to infuse divine love and wisdom into our hearts? God is love, and to deprive truth of love is to deprive it of that which makes it truth; for the practical nature of a truth is one and the same with the essence of a truth itself: good is use, says Swedenborg, and truth is the form of

* Any non-practical doctrine, when made the basis of a system, becomes relatively to that system practical, because it is upon this that the system rests. Hence, even the doctrine of the tripersonality, or any other doctrine, however non-practical, becomes, relatively to the system based upon it, practical. In the same manner, there is no hypothesis, however visionary, which is not of practical importance *to the system* which it supports. To call, however, either of these practical, in the sense for which we are contending, is evidently improper.

good. A speculation, though true, is not a truth, in the Scripture sense of the term. Truth is living; it is the Lord himself; and truth in us is not faith in a proposition, but God's image in the soul. Hence I would humbly submit, that the church is no more a church for handing down to posterity certain doctrines, which it acknowledges it does not understand, and which it receives because tradition handed them down to it, and they are supposed to be proved by Scripture, than a man is a Christian for handing down to posterity a Bible which his forefathers handed down to him. The way for a church to hand down truths to posterity is, not merely by transmitting them as speculations received from tradition, or even proved by Scripture, but by implanting them in the wills and *understandings* of its members, thus realizing God's image within them, and leaving their children to inherit a nature less prone to evil and averse to Divine goodness. The church was not designed to be a mere garner in which the corn is to be treasured up, but a field into which it is to be sown. The corn should be in the earth, not locked up in the garner. Our duty is not to stand at the door and keep the key, but to be out in the field, cultivating the seed; for truth is like seed; and what is the practical tendency of seed? Is it not to grow? Is it not to develop its powers of life? To increase itself, and to bring forth sixty or a hundred fold? If this be the case, then are speculative doctrines but the tares of the church, which have the appearance of genuine corn without the reality. It is true they originally sprang from genuine seed, but it is confessed they bring forth nothing. In receiving the fundamental doctrines of Christianity as subjective truths, we do not reject any that are merely objective, because we do not acknowledge any such to exist; they are objective only in proportion as they are not received into our life; hence, whatever relation they may have to other beings, they have also a direct relation to man, so that we cannot disregard any in consequence of admitting they have little or no practical relation to us. The supposed speculative character of a Christian doctrine, does not arise from the genuine truth of the doctrine itself, but from the speculative manner of viewing it. The speculativeness is not in the doctrine, but in the church; not in the Word of God, but in the mind of the reader. There is a great difference between that view of a doctrine which we admit to be practical, but relatively speculative only because we have not

yet practised it, and a doctrine which, in our original conceptions of its nature, we have deprived of all practical relations, and, for this reason, pronounced to be speculative. Upon the former principle, not upon the latter, we may admit much of what Swedenborg has stated in his revelations to appear to be relatively speculative, and we shall have occasion to illustrate this truth in the course of our remarks.

I now come to the other part of our subject, and, indeed, to the principal object of this letter; I mean the alleged revelations of Swedenborg, of which it is affirmed, that they are of a non-practical character.

Your Grace observes, that Swedenborg "professed to have been favored with most copious and distinct revelations, to have visited the celestial abodes, and to have conversed with various orders of beings, of all of which he gives minute descriptions. Yet, though his followers insist much on the importance of believing in this pretended revelation, it would, I believe, be difficult for them to state even any one point in which a man is called upon to alter, either his conduct, his motives, or his moral sentiments, in consequence of such belief. The system furnishes abundant matter of faith, and food for curiosity; but has little or no intelligible reference to practice." An ordinary reader of the Essays might naturally, from this statement, be disposed to presume, that the revelations alleged to be made to Swedenborg were principally concerning the celestial abodes, and the various orders of spiritual beings; that, as such, whatever relation they might have to the other world, they have no relation to this. Now the principal revelation alleged to be made to Swedenborg, is that of The Internal Sense of the Holy Word—a revelation all mention of which the Essays have omitted, and which may be considered quite independently of those to which they allude; for even though Swedenborg's alleged intercourse with the spiritual world were considered only as the day-dream of an enthusiast, yet this need not affect the truth of the revelation of the Internal Sense of the Holy Word as unfolded by him, the evidence of which stands upon its own basis. So far, indeed, is this the case, that some have fully believed in the reality of Swedenborg's intercourse with the spiritual world, who yet do not comprehend his explanations of the internal sense of the Word of God; while others, who delight in his doctrines, confess the difficulty they find in receiving all his visions.

As, however, in the words of your Grace, "both reason and experience shew, that it is the obvious policy of an impostor, and the most natural delusion of a visionary, to treat much of curious and hidden matters relative to the divine operations, beyond what is conducive to practical instruction," "and to be much occupied in ministering to speculative curiosity;" as the Essays observe, that the *system* of Swedenborg affords food for this curiosity; that we ought to consider "whether the case is likely to be the same with a real revelation," and that "such an inquiry will be profitable and satisfactory, if fully pursued;" permit me to state the results of an inquiry made upon the principles recommended by Your Grace,—an inquiry which I have found both profitable and satisfactory; and which has terminated in the conviction, that the Internal Sense of the Word of God, as alleged to be revealed to Swedenborg, does not appeal to a blind credulity, is not speculative, does not minister to curiosity, but has a direct intelligible relation to our life and conduct, and is of the highest practical importance.

On entering, however, upon the arguments on this subject, I find myself anticipated by certain objections; objections *in limine*, against all further revelations whatever from the Almighty, whether through Swedenborg or any other human medium. If these objections be well founded, it is of no use to enter upon any inquiry into the particular revelations alleged to have been made to Swedenborg; I am, therefore, under the necessity of first answering such of the objections as seem more particularly to bear against any further revelation of the Internal Sense of the Word of God; and the remaining ones, which more particularly bear against any further knowledge with regard to the spiritual world, I shall reserve as a subject for separate consideration.

With regard to objections *in limine* against all further revelations whatever from the Almighty, it may first be remarked, that they are not unusual, and are frequently accompanied with feelings so strong, as either to prevent any inquiry upon the subject, or to predispose the mind, while professedly making the inquiry, against all the evidence adduced. When to this state are added, the dislike of any thing in the shape of innovation, the satisfaction which some persons find in religious knowledge as it is, and their instinctive recoil from what does not harmonize with their views, they come to the present argument with

all their mental powers and faculties committed to the keeping of the strong man armed; being willing to believe nothing, except as he may happen to allow them to believe. These often receive the doctrine of no further revelations with gladness; because they are thus rid of a very troublesome thought, and their old habits and opinions are left undisturbed. When, therefore, they pray that they may be led into all truth, they mean only such truth as may be in conformity with their preconceived views; since nothing else will they allow to be truth. Hence, their supplications to the Almighty for Divine illumination, amount to nothing more than asking Him to confirm them in their own opinions. To such persons it would be needless to address myself. I shall, therefore, speak only to those, who, notwithstanding their opposition to the principles of Swedenborg, are not unwilling to make further inquiry into the subject; to listen with an impartial mind to the evidence adduced; and to consider it possible, that, however right they may be in some things, they may be wrong in others; and this, too, on points where they least suspect it.

I proceed, then, to the consideration of certain popular objections, many of which, it appears that, in various parts of your writings, even Your Grace has not considered unworthy of your sanction. First, That we have light enough already, and do not need more. Secondly, That God never designed to make us prophets. Thirdly, That we ought not to be wise above that which is written. Fourthly, That man has no faculties adequate to the knowledge of the higher divine mysteries. Fifthly, That inquiry into them proceeds from a love of novelty. Sixthly, That there may be new discoveries in science, but not in religion.

First, it is objected, that we have light enough already, and do not need more.

Is not this the same with asserting, that we are good enough already, and do not need to be better? For goodness and truth are inseparably united; we cannot possess one without possessing the other. Divine goodness cannot consist with a state of spiritual darkness; and it would be difficult to discover how the Christian can be too much enlightened. Assuredly, when he experiences Divine light in his soul, he loves it so much that he prays for more, knowing, in the language of the Psalmist, that, "in thy light we see light." If a man says he has light enough already, how can he think of praying for more? The force of the objection, however, would seem to lie only in its

ambiguity. For, if by light be meant mere head knowledge, or the mere science of religion, then, undoubtedly, of this we may already have enough; nay, we may possess too much; and further, still, it might have been better for us if we never had any at all. If we possess any knowledge of religion, however practical, which nevertheless we do not mean to practise, we have not only light enough, but too much; if we possess any knowledge of religion which we do not practise, but try to do so, we may have sufficient knowledge for the present, but not for the future; for as our practice may be always improving, so the time may come when further knowledge may be desirable. Can any true Christian say, that at any period he possesses too much knowledge of himself? That the light whereby he is enabled to discover the evils of his nature, and the purity and holiness of God, he already possesses to a greater degree than is needful? Or, that he has already so much, that, in this life, he will never need more? If this be the case, what further proof can be given that he is in total darkness, and that, instead of having light enough, he has none whatever? Remove, then, the ambiguity of the expression, and the objection is removed. That we may have more light than we use, may be true. That we may desire no more, may also be true. This may be said of the world in its darkest and corruptest state; yet, so far from its being a reason why God should not send further light, it may be the very reason why he should; for if he did not, even that we possess might be extinguished. The Jews had certainly more light than they used; yet this did not prevent our Savior from coming among them, and diffusing a still further degree. "The light shined in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." The contentment of the world in general with the degree of light they possess, is never any argument with Divine Providence for withholding his light from the few who want more. The invalidity of the objection is the more evident, when we consider that the internal sense of the Holy Word, as explained by Swedenborg, is alleged to be, not the light of mere science or abstract knowledge; but one which reveals the mystery of the human heart, and of the holiness of the Divine nature, in direct relation to the present state of the church. To affirm otherwise, is, for the present at least, to beg the question. Nay, to assume that we have already light enough for all practical purposes, is to beg the question;

for the ground of the revelations alleged to be made to Swedenborg is, that we have not sufficient light; that God has come and removed the candlestick of the church out of its place; she having put darkness for light, and light for darkness. That a church may possess a degree of light adequate to the practice *she* requires of her members, may be true; but the question is, whether the standard of practice with which she is content, be itself adequate to that which is required of her. We shall see that it is not; that light enough she may have for all *her* practical purposes, but not for those of her Lord and Master.

It is objected, secondly, that God never designed to make us prophets, and that it is time enough for us to have a knowledge of events, after they are fulfilled.

But is not this as much as to say, that if a man warned us beforehand of our house being robbed, it would be early enough for us to notice the warning after the robbery had been effected? For our Lord declares, that he will "come as a thief in the night," "and at such an hour as we look not for him." Suppose any one should warn us of the coming of a flood, which, unless we escaped, would inevitably destroy us; should we act as reasonable creatures, if we answered, that it was time enough to obey the warning after the event was fulfilled? For our Lord affirms, that "as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also at the coming of the Son of Man,"—"they knew not until the flood came and swept them all away." God, certainly, never designed to make us prophets, that we might be enabled to foretel future historical events; nor are the prophecies, recorded in Scripture, interpreted by Swedenborg as relating to this subject, but only to the spiritual state of the church, consequently, to the spiritual state of every individual of the church. The subject of the prophecies, therefore, is as practical to every member of the church, as the nature of his own spiritual state; and, if he is warned beforehand of certain errors and evils into which, without Divine illumination, he will assuredly fall, by reason of the darkness of the age, what subject can be more practical to him, than the one which treats of his danger? He is not called upon to foretel the future, but to understand the present; to give the interpretation of the handwriting which is upon the wall. Besides, if it be time enough to know the meaning of prophecy after the events to which it relates are fulfilled, what if they are already

fulfilled!* What if they have already given to prophecy its interpretation! What if we are blind both to the event and the interpretation! Many seem to imagine, that events have only to be fulfilled, in order for us to recognise them; and certainly, where these events are only outward or political changes, such *may* be the fact, (although even in this case, it is not necessarily so;) but where they are the same with inward, moral, or spiritual states, great is the mistake to suppose, that we must be necessarily aware of them. The character of an age may be as much hid from that age, as the character of an individual from himself. Generally speaking, the most unfavorable period for ascertaining it is, that of the very age itself; for the mind has been so educated and constituted in agreement with its peculiarities, that it is not able to discern them; nor, perhaps, are they ever seen, until after the age has passed away, and all the evils have been suffered, which might otherwise have been averted. If this be the case with regard to external political events, how much more is it the case with regard to inward and spiritual states; for changes in the political world are comparatively easily discernible; the spiritual states of the church are not so discernible; they are more veiled over by holy external appearances, and are more deeply hidden within the soul. The longer a state continues, also, the less is its nature likely to be perceived; and if it be one of error and evil, nothing but a new communication of light to those who are willing to receive it, can enable them to see or understand it. After all, therefore, it is possible for us to be living during a state of the church, of the real nature of which, even the wisest of its members may be in—*profound ignorance.*

But I proceed to a third objection, which is, that "we ought not to be wise above that which is written."

Undoubtedly; but neither ought we to be wise *below* that which is written. How indifferent are some, if any of their fellow-creatures are ignorant of what they ought to know, if, in fine, they are wise far below what is written; how alarmed, should any appear to them to be wise above what is written. Now we readily grant, that to be wise above what is written is a great evil; but the question is, what that is which is written; and until this question be settled,

* The reader is here referred to a work entitled, "A View of the Scripture Revelations Concerning a Future State, by a Country Pastor," particularly to Lecture vii, where this argument is very well stated, and all that I wish is here to avail myself of its application.

it will be in vain to attempt to decide, whether any given views are above or below what is written. There are some, however, (and I am happy not to include the Author of the Essays,) who would seem to settle this question in a summary manner. In determining what is written, the rule to be observed is, as they affirm, that we are to adopt only that sense of Scripture which is plain and obvious. This, undoubtedly, seems a plausible mode; and yet it is one which, I presume, will not bear examination. For when we speak of the plain sense of the Word of God, it may be asked, plain to whom? To the natural man, or to the spiritual? Even in regard to historical facts, Your Grace has well shewn, how a person, in the present day, may be mistaken in speaking of the plain sense of Scripture; and if the natural man may be mistaken in regard to external historical facts,* how much more is he liable to mistake, when he applies the test of plainness to internal spiritual truths! Assuredly, if we adopt that sense only which is plain to the natural man, it is not very improbable that we may adopt the wrong one; "for the natural man perceiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."† If, therefore, in determining the sense of Scripture, any person, whatever be his abilities or learning, uses only his natural discernment, and appeals to what he considers the plain sense of the Word of God; there needs no stronger proof, that the sense to which he appeals is not the primary sense designed by the Divine Author; and yet, on this appeal, rests the whole of the argument generally urged by those, who speak of the plain sense and meaning of Scripture. To the natural man, the plainest sense is the merely historical or moral sense: the less spiritual it is, the plainer it is to him, nothing being to him less plain and obvious than the spiritual sense. To the spiritual man, however, the spiritual sense, to the extent in which he understands it, is quite as plain as to the natural man the natural sense. The question, therefore, is, what is the state of mind of the person who makes the appeal to Scripture? If it be a merely natural state, the plainer to him be the sense of Scripture to which

* See Sermon ii. Name of Emmanuel.

† Of course, the whole of this argument is intended to apply only to those books of Scripture in which we maintain there is an inward sense, and which, by way of distinction from the other books in Scripture, we expressly denominate—The Word of God.

he appeals, the more natural it is, and the less spiritual; consequently, the farther removed from the one primarily designed, that is to say, in those books in which a spiritual sense exists. What was plainer to the Jews, than that, when the Messiah was spoken of as one whose kingdom should have no end, a temporal monarchy was meant? And why? Because they had no idea of any other. The plainest and most obvious sense of Scripture, in these passages, was to them its most natural and literal sense; the lower it was, the plainer it was. If a man says, therefore, that he rejects a given interpretation of the Word of God, because it is not the plain one, what is this, but making the degree of his discernment the standard of Divine Wisdom? If his life and conduct were more improved, how does he know but his spiritual discernment would be increased, and that things would be plain to him then, which are now hidden from his view? When Divine Wisdom is represented in the Book of Proverbs, as speaking, what is her language? "All the words of my mouth are plain"—to whom? —"to him," it is added, "that understandeth." If a man, therefore, says of a given interpretation of Scripture, that it is not the plain one, he should first consider, what is the degree of his own spiritual discernment; for the Word of God, as to its spiritual truths, does not profess to be plainly intelligible, except to those who can understand, any more than objects are designed, in the natural world, to be plainly visible, except to those who can see. Now in Scripture it is a first principle, that the state of our spiritual understanding depends upon the state of the heart; therefore, in Daniel it is said, "none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand." To consider, therefore, the degree of plainness with which a passage in the Word of God may present itself to us, as a test of the only nature and extent of its meaning, is much the same as if the person who saw men as trees walking, should insist upon this as the real fact, because it was the one which was the most obvious to his eyes in the state in which they then were.

A fourth objection is, that man has no faculties adequate to a better knowledge of Divine mysteries.

It is much to be feared, that, in too many instances, this is the case. The mind has become so wedded to merely natural things, and the reason, consequently, so darkened, that the faculty of understanding spiritual things has become almost extinct. May not such an objection, however,

instead of being an argument against a revelation of these mysteries, be a strong argument in its favor? May it not shew the necessity of some interposition on the part of Providence, without which, the only faculties which entitled man to the name of a human being, would be on the verge of being finally lost—nay, are supposed by some to be actually extinct. Alas! what is it that makes Divine truths such profound inscrutable mysteries? Is it that they were not intended for man while on this side of the grave?—or, that he has buried the higher powers of his soul in a selfish and sensual nature, which averts itself from spiritual things, and is incompetent to understand them? Ought we not, at least, to inquire how far this may be the case? How far the mysteriousness of Christian doctrine, which persons often allude to, originates from the infinitude of Divine truth, and how far, from the carnal state of our own minds? Ought we not to ask, whether the darkness be only in the object, or also in the eye that looks at it?—whether the darkness be that of night to an eye that is open, or that of day to an eye that is closed?—Is not light itself as darkness, when we are blind? Have we not yet learnt that man has spiritual faculties as well as natural? Yea, that natural faculties were given him, in order that he might become spiritual?

But it is said, finite faculties can never comprehend what is infinite. And can they ever *comprehend* what is finite? Can the finite *comprehend* the finite any more than it can *comprehend* The Infinite? Can it rightly understand the finite at all, except in proportion as it beholds in it The Infinite? Surely, as in regard to the comprehension of The Infinite, the highest and the lowest faculties are upon a level; so, in regard to the *comprehension* of the finite, the case is the same; for to *comprehend* the finite, is, in fact, to comprehend The Infinite. But because we cannot *comprehend* the finite, is that any reason why we should cease to advance in our knowledge respecting it? And because we cannot comprehend The Infinite, must we, therefore, cease to advance in our knowledge of God? Or, if we do not, must we be considered, when attempting to know Him, as attempting to *comprehend* Him? The angels are finite as well as we; and in relation to The Infinite, stand upon the same ground as we do, having no more faculty than ourselves of *perfect comprehension.* The highest angel, perhaps, never could possess a wisdom adequate to that displayed in the creation of the smallest leaflet. We

never, perhaps, can fully *comprehend* ourselves; but Your Grace will admit, that all these are no just reasons for never attempting to know the state of our hearts, the laws of the phenomena of nature, or the perfections of the Deity. And if these are no sufficient reasons, where are we to stop?—who is to draw the boundary line? May it not be affirmed, that the principal thing which, in spiritual matters, limits the understanding, is the state of the heart? I say, the principal thing; because, undoubtedly, the very condition of our being is itself somewhere a limit. But let us not confound this condition, imposed by Providence, with that which we have imposed upon ourselves. It is time enough to consider the limit imposed by Providence, when we have arrived at it. Besides, to place a limit to the spiritual sight, is to place a limit to the spiritual life. To say, "hitherto shalt thou see, and no further," is to say, "hitherto shalt thou be holy, and no further;" for as the truth cannot be in us without goodness, so we cannot have genuine goodness without truth. In the Divine order of things the two cannot be separated. To place a limit, therefore, to our advance in truth, is to place a limit to our advance in goodness. How darkly do many reason upon this subject, speaking of the spiritual faculties as they do of the natural!—of ability to comprehend spiritual things as they do of natural talent and genius!—not recollecting that, as natural talent is given them by natural birth, so spiritual talent can be given them only by spiritual birth; and that it is only in proportion as a man is regenerated, that he can *see* the kingdom of God. Mistaking, as they do, the merely natural faculties for the spiritual; and then, endeavoring with the natural to comprehend spiritual things, one attempt, of course, fails after another; their labors are all fruitless; and the truth at which they are aiming, is, consequently, declared to be wholly beyond the reach of man, never designed by Providence to be known, written only with a view to try our faith, and never intended to be otherwise than—inscrutable mystery; that, hence, it is the part of the humble mind to be content with a state of profound ignorance, and only of a presumptuous inquirer to seek for more Divine light. Undoubtedly, they are right, if the person seeks for Divine knowledge in *their* way, or upon *their* principles. But in coming to their conclusion, this is the point they assume. Now, we reject those merely natural ideas, which they would carry into the investigation of Divine truth. We know that a spiritual mind only can

have a saving knowledge of spiritual things, and this is the only ground upon which we attempt to acquire that knowledge. Besides, are we quite sure that confessed ignorance of spiritual things is always a sign of humility? May it not be the sign of that merely natural state of mind, to which we have been adverting?—of that indocility of will, which refuses to believe, that its failure in the search of truth, was, in the slightest degree, owing to commencing the inquiry upon wrong principles?—or that, previous to inquiry, it was under the influence of error, and of natural and carnal feelings? May it not be the sign of that humility which tacitly says, "If I cannot find out the truth upon the principles I now hold, I will not attempt to find it out at all: it shall be consistent with my present views, or else I will reject it; I will maintain that it is inscrutable mystery, and that every one who attempts to inquire into it, is actuated by a spirit of curiosity or presumption." Yet, what says an* eminent philosopher upon this subject? "It is madness and a contradiction, to expect that things, which were never yet performed, should be effected, except by means hitherto untried."

Upon what ground, moreover, does any person maintain that such a knowledge would be speculative, or not practical? How can he maintain it to be so, if he begins with declaring the whole subject to be a mystery, and that, as such, he knows nothing of the matter? If he had pretended to understand the mystery, and having this done, clearly perceived that it had no relation to practice, he would be justified in affirming such a knowledge to be speculative, and not practical; but when he begins with declaring himself to be ignorant of the subject, why should he proceed to pronounce upon it with as much confidence as if he understood it? The explanations given by others, he may, indeed, pronounce to be speculative, or non-practical, so far as he understands them; particularly, when he believes they are untrue; but has he, therefore, a right to assume, that no true explanation of the subject can be practical? Or, that the subject is one with which we are not concerned?

To pronounce every thing in religion, with which we happen to be unacquainted, to be speculative and non-practical, appears, then, to be a premature proceeding. If the subject be one upon which we confess that we are

* Lord Bacon, Novum Organum—Apophthegm, vi.

entirely in the dark, how can we come to any other conclusion than that of Bishop Butler; who, speaking of the economy of the universe and the course of nature, of which he says we are confessedly ignorant, &c., observes,* "*What would be the consequence if we could really get an insight into these things, is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or, divert us from, what we have to do in this present state.*"† This, I conceive, then, to be the only conclusion to which the distinguished Author of the Essays is entitled on the present occasion. I respectfully submit, that he is not justified in assuming, that what is alleged to be unknown in religion, or unrevealed, would, if known, be non-practical; and then proceed to hold up to view those, who believe these mysteries to be revealed, as, necessarily, mere speculators. All that he is entitled to is, the mere doubt and uncertainty whether such a knowledge would be practical or not. He has *assumed* that it would be non-practical, and this *mere assumption* vitiates, as I humbly conceive, the whole of the argument which is founded upon it. As to the positive affirmation, that what Swedenborg *has written* upon the subject is non-practical, the truth of this will be ascertained in the sequel; and, again, as to the objection, that had the subject been practical, God would long since have revealed it, this, it will be seen, is reserved for a separate reply.

In the mean time, it may be well to repeat the question, why ignorance alone should be considered as consistent with humility? True it is, that this present world is but the infancy of our being; that, as such, know what we may, we are, after all, but children. It should, however, be considered, that the very design of Divine knowledge is more and more to make us children. None was so little a child as Jesus himself. Arrayed in all the majesty of his glory, even now none is so little a child as He: no seraph so lowly, yet none so wise; for with whatever humility the angels may bow before his throne, it is a humility which first cometh from that throne before which they bow; and if in this world the smile of the infant be that which most directly reflects the Majesty of the Most High, so have always the wisest and the best men been most truly children; and though filled with the light of the glory of God, yet always have they most confessed their ignorance. Their knowledge has taught them to see that, which, with-

* Sermon on the Ignorance of Man. † Ibid.

out their knowledge, they could not see, the all-sufficiency of the Creator, the nothingness of the creature; none, therefore, can more truly say with the Psalmist, "Lord, I am not high-minded: I have no proud looks; I do not exercise myself in great matters which are too high for me; but I refrain my soul and keep it low; like as a child that is weaned from his mother; yea, my soul is even as a weaned child," (Psalm cxxxi.) Let us not, then, suppose, that the ignorance confessed by wisdom, is the same with the ignorance of the infant or child in its natural state. "There are some," says Swedenborg, "who imagine genuine innocence to be the same with that of natural infancy; by reason of what the Lord said concerning infants, that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven;' and that they, who do not become as infants, cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. But they who give in to such imagination, are unacquainted with the internal sense of The Word; and, consequently, with what is meant by infancy. By infancy is meant, the innocence of intelligence and wisdom; which is such, that they who possess it acknowledge themselves to have life from the Lord alone, and that the Lord is their only Father; for man is man by virtue of the intelligence of truth and the wisdom of good, which he hath solely from the Lord. Real essential innocence, which in the Word is called infancy, hath no existence, or abode, but in wisdom; insomuch that, the wiser any one becomes, so much the more innocent he is: wherefore, the Lord is essential innocence, because he is essential wisdom," (Arc. Cœl. 2305.)—I shall only add, that the progress from natural to spiritual innocence, as unfolded by Swedenborg, appears to me profoundly interesting; and, as I believe, of the deepest importance to those, who desire to walk in the way which leads to the mind of Jesus.

These observations enable me now to answer an objection, which is stated in the second Essay, p. 165. Speaking of the revelation of God in Christ Jesus, it is observed, "Our views, indeed, on this awful subject must, after all, be indistinct, confused, and imperfect; but if they are better than we could otherwise have attained, and are the utmost that we can or need attain, the object is sufficiently accomplished." We have here an acknowledgment, that the principles upon which the Divine Nature is generally contemplated, lead to confused and indistinct views; and we have already pointed out the cause of this effect. So long as the error is committed, of contemplating the Humanity

of the Lord as finite and creaturely, and hence, of contemplating the Divinity out of the Humanity, or the Humanity out of the Divinity, it is impossible to be otherwise. I grant that, if this obscurity, indistinctness, and confusion, be the utmost that in this life we can or need attain, a better knowledge of God is in this world unnecessary; and that we have a good *a priori* argument against further light. This, however, is a point which the Essays *assume;* but to which we cannot assent.* It is added, however, "and, indeed, if any one had *clear*, *distinct*, and *complete* views of the Divine Being, this would alone be a sufficient proof to me that they were *incorrect* views." Now, if by complete be meant adequate, it is readily granted that we can never have adequate views of the Deity; inasmuch as, what is finite can never be adequate to what is infinite. Nevertheless, this does not imply, as I humbly conceive, that all our views of the Deity must be necessarily obscure, confused, and indistinct. An idea may, I presume, be very inadequate, without being either indistinct or confused. We may have a clear and distinct idea of a thing to a certain extent, beyond which the idea may indeed be obscure and confused. The point up to which we may have clear ideas of Divine Truth, is the degree of goodness at which we have arrived, and beyond which our views become obscure and indistinct. Whether in regard to man or angel, the rule holds equally good, that "the pure in heart only shall see God." Their ideas of God are true, clear, and distinct, according to the degree of purity to which

* Authors sometimes speak, not only of the impossibility of knowing God as he is in himself, but of the impossibility of knowing the human mind, or any object in creation, as it is in itself. Now the expression, "*as it is in itself*," if rightly understood, may be unobjectionable, and a convenient mode of speaking; but still, if by the terms, *as it is in itself*, be meant, as it is independently of any relation to any thing else, Swedenborg shews, that there is no such thing created. There is no such thing as an irrelative essence or substance, or any independent being; and, therefore, the very idea of contemplating a thing as that which it is not, appears to be inadmissible. Every thing in this visible world is but an effect; and to attempt to know the effect *as it is in itself*, or independently of any end or cause, is to attempt a knowledge of that which is not and cannot be, nay, which implies a contradiction. To speak, therefore, of a thing as it is in itself, or, independently of any relations, is much the same thing, as to speak of a branch as it is in itself, or a leaf as it is in itself, the eye or the heart, as it is in itself; for it is a first principle with Swedenborg, that every thing is in its order; and order implies relation; the higher we ascend in tracing the essences of things, the higher is the order of relations at which we arrive; the essence in a lower degree being a universal in relation to the particulars below it, but a particular in relation to the universal above it, or to the essence in a higher degree. This, however, cannot be understood without a perusal of his works.

they have attained. Nevertheless, as in relation to the Divine purity, the very heavens are unclean in the sight of God, so, in relation to the Divine glory, the light of the highest angel is comparatively darkness; still, we should scarcely be justified in saying, that angelic perceptions were dark, indistinct, and confused. The same rule holds in regard to man, although it is capable of being exemplified in him only in a lower degree. There is a point up to which a good man has a clear idea of Divine Truth, and beyond which it becomes obscure; a greater clearness in his perception requiring a higher degree of good than that to which he has yet attained. Nevertheless, the purer be the good to which he attains, the clearer will be the perception at which he arrives. This is true with regard to his condition, both in this world and in the next. Hence, Swedenborg observes, (Arcana Cœlestia, 3833,) "During man's initiation into truth, and thence into good, all that he learns at this time is obscure to him; but when good is conjoined thereto, and he thence respects truth, in this case, all is clear to him; and this successively more and more. For now he is no longer in doubt whether a thing be, or whether it be so; but he knows that it is, and that it is so. When man is in this state, he then begins to know innumerable things; for he proceeds, in this case, from the good and truth which he believes and perceives, as from a centre to the circumferences; and in proportion as he proceeds, in the same proportion he sees the things which are round about; and successively extends his views, by a continual removal and dilatation of the boundaries thereof. Henceforth, also, he commences from every object in the space within those boundaries; and hence, as from new centres, he produces new circumferences, and so forth. By this means, the light of truth derived from good increases immensely, and becomes as a continuous lucid principle; for, in this case, he is in the light of heaven, which is from the Lord. But with such as are in doubt and in disquisition whether a thing be, and whether it be so, these innumerable, yea, indefinite things, do not at all appear. All and singular things are to them obscure, and are scarce respected as one principle really existing, but rather as one principle whose existence is doubtful. In such a state is human wisdom and intelligence at this day; when he is deemed wise who can reason with ingenuity whether a thing exists; and he is deemed still wiser, who can reason in proof of its non-existence. As, for example;

in respect to this question, whether there exists an internal sense of the Word which is called mystical; until this is believed, it is impossible for any one to attain the least knowledge of those innumerable things which are in the Internal Sense, and which are so many as to fill the Universal Heaven with an infinite variety. So, also, in regard to the Divine Providence; he who reasons concerning it, whether it be only universal and not extended to particular things, cannot possibly become acquainted with the innumerable arcana respecting Providence, which are as many in number as the contingencies of every one's life, from first to last, and from the creation of the world to its end, yea, to eternity. To take yet another example: he who reasons whether it be possible for any one to be principled in good, by reason that the will of man is radically depraved, cannot possibly know all the arcana relating to regeneration, nor even that a new will is implanted by the Lord, together with the arcana of such implantation; and so in all other cases. Hence it may be clearly seen, in what obscurity such persons are, and that they do not even see, much less touch, the first threshhold of wisdom."

The fifth popular objection is, that our reception of the revelations of Swedenborg, proceeds from a love of novelty.

Your Grace observes, that even the early converts to Christianity were led astray by a spirit of innovation; and that, (Bampton Lectures, page 78,) "the danger which they withstood, though then peculiarly strong, is not now, nor ever will be, removed, while human nature remains the same. Most sedulously are we still bound to guard against the temptation of novelty, when we consider that it had power to seduce even the hearers of the apostles themselves. With this view, we must constantly bear in mind, that, however the case may be with other subjects, in religion, whatever appears to be new, if it relate to any point of considerable importance, carries with it, so far, a presumption against its being right."

That a mere love of novelty is to be deprecated, there is no doubt, and more particularly in our search after Him who is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." In this observation, every sincere Christian must agree with Your Grace. It is certain, however, that as many love a thing only because it is new, so also that with these persons, as soon as the novelty is gone, the opinion is apt to be readily parted with. I am not aware, however, that

this is the case with those who receive the writings of Swedenborg; but have good reason to believe the contrary. The quiet, steady, unwavering state of mind which is manifested by those who have been *principled* in these writings, is a fact so remarkable, as not to have escaped the attention of many of our opponents. With regard, however, to a mere love of novelty, it will be readily granted by Your Grace, that, although it is an error, it is not the *only* error to be avoided; inasmuch as we are also called upon sedulously to guard against a mere love of antiquity. The early Christians could not so fully display this failing, because the church was then in its infancy; the principle, therefore, could not be fully developed till subsequent ages, when the church had become somewhat older. It is, however, certain, that as some persons love what is new only because it is new, so others love what is old only because it is old. In so doing, they have this advantage, that, being always stationary, they can assume the appearance of what is sometimes, undoubtedly, a great virtue, a stability and fixity of mind; an immovable persistence in which, they represent as walking in the old ways, and abiding in the faith once delivered to the saints. There is nothing, however, in which persons are more apt to be deceived by appearances, than in the case of those, who, in thus adhering to antiquity, are presumed to have a fixity and stability of principle. It is often for the very reason that they have no such thing, that they are glad to cling to any thing which appears to be stationary, and hence to what appears to be old. They are like a vessel without rudder or compass; and hence feel themselves safe only in harbor, it may be, drawn up upon shore, and there made secure; nothing being so much dreaded by them, as contact with the element upon which they were designed to be useful. When society in general is formed of this class, they who receive what appears to be new become the exceptions; hence their principles are more the subject of notice, and a love of novelty becomes the theme of general reprobation, while there is an utter silence with regard to the love of antiquity. Besides, in this case, the errors of those who are misled by novelty, are errors in detail, errors of individuals. The errors of those who are seduced by a love of antiquity, are errors in mass. The ruin of ten minds by a love of novelty is ten separate events; the ruin of a society, nation, or church, by a mere love of antiquity, is only a single event.

That which is alleged to be novel, is, however, too often judged to be so in relation to that which is *common*, not in relation to that which is *old*. Considered in relation to that which is common, it may be novel; considered in relation to that which is old, it may not be so; for, instead of being any thing new, it may be only the old revived. Even, however, the love of antiquity is often not so strong as the love of what is common; for it is frequently the case, that, however old a thing may be, if it be not commonly adopted, neither its excellence nor its antiquity will be of any avail in introducing it into practice. The approbation of antiquity is only the approbation of the dead; the approbation of society, as it is, is the approbation of the living; and we know how strong a motive to action has been always the love of the praise of men, particularly the praise of the living. Now I will not say, that a person might not read the revelations of Swedenborg out of a love of novelty; but it will be seen in the sequel, that there are too many barriers in the way to permit him, finally, to receive them upon this principle; and that it is as absurd to suppose, that a person does so from a mere love of novelty, as to suppose, that it is a mere love of novelty which induces the natural man to become spiritual. It is, however, singular, that many, when arguing upon the subject of doctrinal novelties, should entirely forget the possibility or probability of any new revelation; and treat the whole subject as if every one admitted, that no such promise in Scripture had ever been made, or as if no rational man had ever believed it; for if it be true that a doctrine is false because it is new, or because no one had any opportunity before of considering whether it were true, it necessarily follows, that any alleged revelation which shall pretend to any thing new, come with what authority it may, is justly entitled, on that very account, to be considered as the greatest delusion. Besides, although a mere love of novelty deserves to be condemned, yet, as one extreme is apt to give rise to another, may we not ask, whether it is not possible that the blind love of novelty in some, may not be produced by the blind love of antiquity in others? May not, in fine, a candid mind ask, how far the following observation, which Lord Bacon applied to the arts and sciences, is applicable to the theology of the day? "If a man turn his eyes to the library, he may, perhaps, be surprised at the immense variety of books he finds; but, upon examining and diligently weighing their matters and contents, he will be struck with amazement on the other

side; and, after finding no end of repetitions, but that men continually treat and speak the same things over and over again, fall from his admiration of the variety into a wonder at the want and scantiness of those things, which have hitherto detained and possessed the minds of men." Did not this great genius frequently deplore that shew of variety in scientific works, which, upon examination, resolved itself into infinite repetitions of a few things, or numerous applications of a few principles differently dressed and modelled, according to particular humors, fashions, and exigencies? (Nov. Org. Ap. 85.)

A sixth objection, to which I now advert, is one which is not unfrequently advanced by divines, namely, that discoveries may be made in science and philosophy, because these are subjects proper to the exercise of human reason; but that God, having made a final revelation, which in no wise resulted from any exercise of our faculties, no discoveries of importance in Christianity can in future be made, nor can any more be expected.

In order to meet the objection fairly, allow me to quote Your Grace's words. "In philosophy we know not that there may not hereafter be discoveries made, even of greater magnitude and importance than all that have gone before; so that there, though a rash prejudice in favor of every thing new is to be avoided, the pursuit of novelty and truth may often chance to coincide. In religion, on the contrary, a full and final revelation having been made, no discovery, properly so called, of any high importance, is to be expected; not merely, because the book which contains all we know of the Divine will has been so long before us, (for so also has the book of nature, in which we are nevertheless daily reading new truths which had escaped the researches of our predecessors,) but because that book was designed by the Almighty to convey such instruction as he judged needful for all; which purpose it would not have answered, had its true meaning in essential points been hidden until now." (Bampton Lectures, page 79.)

Let us suppose the case of a person cultivating science and philosophy, not from a love of novelty, but with a view of improving his mind and acquiring useful knowledge. It will doubtless be granted, that, between a true religion on the one hand, and true science and philosophy on the other, there is some connection, and not only so, but a close connection. If this be the case, is it reasonable to suppose,

that discoveries of great magnitude and importance can be made in science and philosophy, without producing any changes in our views of religion? Or, if this be admitted, will it be maintained that these changes will not be of any great importance? If so, let us take a case, and, first, that of science. Suppose science should discover, that there never could have taken place such a flood as is popularly thought to have occurred in the time of Noah; and that the account of the creation, presented to us in the book of Genesis, cannot possibly be true as popularly interpreted; would the consequences arising from this circumstance occasion no change in our religious views of any importance? If they would not, (and some might think so,) let us take the case of philosophy. Your Grace speaks, in your Bampton Lectures, page 137, of the indistinct comprehension we have of numerous words familiarly employed in our reasoning, "and which lead, by a very few steps, into an unfathomable abyss of darkness. Such are Time, Space, Eternity, Infinity, Cause, and, in short, most of the terms employed in the discussion of questions even of natural religion." Now, as it is acknowledged that, "in philosophy, we know not that there may not hereafter be discoveries made even of greater magnitude and importance than all that have gone before," suppose that, under the blessing of God, philosophy should clear up our ideas upon these subjects; should give us true and distinct views of Time, Space, Eternity, Infinity, Cause, and all those other things which enter into our reasonings, both in natural and revealed religion, and which, Your Grace admits, are at present but a few steps removed from an unfathomable abyss of darkness; can it be said, that if we arrived at true and clear ideas on these subjects, no discoveries had been made, which, in relation to religious knowledge, would be of any great importance? Suppose that, under the blessing of God, a true philosophy should discover to us the nature of the intercourse between the soul and body, nay, in a greater or less degree, the very nature of the soul itself. suppose a true philosophy should discover, that there is a correspondence between the spirit of man and the body of man, hence, between the world of spirit and the world of matter; suppose it should discover the very nature and laws of this correspondence, so as to enable us to see, that material things are types and shadows of spiritual things; suppose, above all, that, by the Divine mercy, it furnished us with a key to open the mysteries of God's word, and enabled us to per-

ceive, that His Word is capable of being interpreted upon the same principle as His works, and that, if so interpreted, views are opened to us of the nature of God and the nature of man, in comparison with which all our former knowledge was ignorance and darkness;—can it be said that, under such circumstances, no discoveries had been made which would have any important influence upon our religious ideas? This case is put hypothetically, because the nature of the argument allows me to do so; inasmuch as it is admitted, that "in philosophy we know not that there may not hereafter be discoveries made even of greater magnitude and importance than all that have gone before." What, my Lord, if the case need not be put hypothetically! What, if these discoveries have already been made! What, if the light has shined in darkness, and the darkness has comprehended it not! It was a pointed question once asked by Swedenborg, "Will it take ages to discover the truth, or ages to acknowledge it when discovered?" Does not the history of human science shew, that in proportion as a truth is great, and transcending the capacity of the age, it is either forgotten or rejected?

There are those, however, who, in opposing our views, would carry Your Grace's principles farther, perhaps, than Your Grace might be disposed to do. The objection founded upon new discoveries in religion and doctrinal novelties, has been urged against us not unfrequently, and insisted upon with no little confidence. It should be remembered, however, that we do not profess to add to, or to take away from, the written Word of God. That Word we consider to be the sole foundation of a true church; and in a stricter sense, too, than some of our opponents, who to the written Word add, what they are pleased to call, the unwritten—an addition not made by us, and one we cannot but deplore. I grant we cannot make new discoveries of Divine truth; but can Divine truth make no new discoveries of itself to us? What is our progress in the Christian life, but a progress in Divine love and wisdom? What is our progress in Divine love, but one from a lower to a higher affection? What is our progress in Divine wisdom, but a progress from the practice of a lower to the practice of a higher truth? Are we always to stand still upon the same level? Are we never to have new thoughts or new affections? Though we can make no new discoveries in revelation, is revelation never to make new discoveries to us? When we find a received truth unpro-

ductive, is it not a sign, either that it is not genuine or that it is dead?—that, in fine, it is speculative, and not practical? Yet the distinguishing characteristic of a living practical truth, is urged against us as a mark of speculative and visionary doctrine; while, as might naturally be expected, the sure mark of a dead and speculative doctrine, is urged against us as the only sign of a genuine truth. If, in rejecting what are called doctrinal novelties, a person means to maintain, that, under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth, we cannot make the same progress in the practical truths of religion as in the practical truths of science, we must be allowed to repudiate such a principle; believing, that any church which maintains it, has arrived at the last days of its spiritual life. For how can we go on to perfection, if we are to stand still in wisdom? Or how can we go on in wisdom, if we are to stand still in truth? Is it not in religion as it is in science, that one truth discovers another? If, then, I find a given doctrine originating something new, the newness of the discovery, so far from being *necessarily* a sign of the speculative nature of the doctrine, *may* be the reverse; because a dead and speculative doctrine cannot originate any thing new and practical, any more than a merely speculative doctrine in science, or one, the practical application of which cannot be seen, can give rise to a new discovery. We know that the Truth of God is eternal and immutable; but though the truth itself cannot change, our conceptions of it may; and indeed become so entirely different, that, in popular language, it may be called a new truth; more especially if, in our original view of it, there was any radical error which experience has enabled us to detect and remove. We ought not, then, to confound our ideas of a truth with the truth itself, and then maintain, that because a truth is immutable, our ideas of it must be stationary,—and that, consequently, there can be no new discoveries.* The error of our opponents appears to lie in this: They first separate doctrine from life: they make it objective, not subjective truth: they regard much more our faith in truth,

* I am aware that it is admitted by Vincentius, that, provided we keep to the received doctrines of the church, we may make as many new discoveries in practical religion as we please. That is to say, we may make as many new discoveries as we please, provided we start upon principles upon which it is impossible to make any. For false principles never can, of themselves, lead to the discovery of new truths. This we see exemplified in the history of the church, which certainly does not appear to have made much progress in this respect, but rather the reverse.

than truth *in* us, growing with our growth, and strengthening with our strength; and because they do this, and consider truth to be extraneous or extrinsical to us, and hence incapable of growth or enlargement, and we repudiate the idea, they pronounce that we are speculative and they are practical, that we add to God's Word and they leave it as it is. Now, we believe that the Word of God is essential life; that whatsoever lives in us must grow, must produce in us something new, this being the very sign of its life. We do not add to the Word of God, but that Word, like seed sown in the heart, adds to itself; and thus, we make first the discovery of the blade, then the new discovery of the ear, then the new discovery of the full corn in the ear; then comes the new insemination of the newly-born seed, then the new blade of the seed newly sown, and so on through a perpetual series of progressions in will, wisdom, and practice. Alas! when will the natural world cease to be a type, and the Christian an image, of never-ending progression? When will corn cease to be sown, and hence to be re-generated? When will a lower truth cease to develop a higher; the higher, one that is still higher, and so on through an everlasting process of regeneration? Assuredly, if regeneration be, after all, only "*a pure act of God's special grace, immanent in himself and terminating in man, limited and determined to a particular time, and incapable of latitude and increase*," the whole of God's spiritual creation must be virtually stationary. If it be said to us, "This is only a dispute about words; you mean by regeneration only what we mean by sanctification;" I answer, if this be the case, the argument is at an end; but I believe the things meant are fundamentally different; because regeneration, as we understand it, is founded upon a doctrine fundamentally different, and because we cannot separate spiritual life from spiritual generation. We do not believe spiritual life to be a simple expansion of the same germ, or the mere continuous enlargement of one form; it is not like a perpetually expanding circle, but a perpetual transition out of a lower form into a higher; out of lower principles into higher; out of lower affections and thoughts, however good and true of their kind, into others still purer, and nearer to the fountain from which they flow.

Were the real principles of the progress of Christian life known and acted upon, there is reason to believe, we should not be constantly hearing so much about mystery

in religion. Religion, like science, would, indeed, always have its mysteries; but they would not be the same mysteries. We should not be perpetually walking the same level, or pursuing the same monotonous round; beholding the same dull cloud, hanging at the same height, over the same precipice, in the same valley, much less gradually sinking down towards us. We know, indeed, that "the wind bloweth where it listeth," that "we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth;" but we must distinguish between that condition which necessarily belongs to a created being, and that which we have imposed upon ourselves. The regeneration of the soul, next to the glorification of the Lord's Humanity, is the Lord's greatest work: it is a work, the mystery of which we never shall fully comprehend; and yet, of which we may obtain a clearer idea in proportion to our progress in Christianity. Like the traveller who ascends the Alps, the higher he goes, the higher appear the heights he has to ascend; yet the broader and more comprehensive the view which lies below him. Such is the picture of progress in spiritual life, and hence, in new discovery, which is made by the Christian.

Having said thus much upon the subject of novelty and new discovery, we proceed to the objection, as thus continued in the Bampton Lectures, page 80.

"If, therefore, for instance, a new mode of interpreting or of translating Scripture be proposed to us, which materially alters its doctrines from what have been uniformly received, we have no need, however plausible it may appear, to rest the question upon critical researches into the ancient languages; our ready answer may be, that Plato, or Aristotle, indeed, may have designed to write mysteriously, and to conceal their doctrines from all but the most acute philosophers; and that Polybius, or Livy, may have been accidentally misunderstood till modern researches cleared up their narratives; but that, if the true sense and doctrine of the Bible was not understood by any for so many centuries, it cannot be called at least a final revelation."

Here, I cannot avoid the opportunity of expressing the pleasure I feel, in finding that Your Grace possessed too sound a judgment to insist upon uniformity of reception as a criterion of the truth of Christian doctrine; and though it is here intimated, that certain doctrines of Christianity, as now generally understood, have been uniformly receiv-

ed, yet there is reason to think that, since this observation was made, the distinguished author has availed himself of the privilege of modifying his views upon the subject. Still, as uniformity of reception is asserted, and an argument is founded upon it, which, in an external point of view, militates against the credit of Swedenborg's alleged revelations; as the principle, moreover, is often insisted upon by those who oppose us, and, indeed, is one of the strong holds of their opposition, I may be pardoned, perhaps, for making a few observations, which, were I appealing to the judgment of Your Grace only, I should consider altogether unnecessary.

Mention, then, is here made of doctrines which have been uniformly received; and the question is, what these doctrines are? On the Primitive Doctrine of Justification, a modern writer observes*—"When from age to age, without any variation, the Fathers deliver, as the sense of the whole church, an interpretation of certain texts which exhibits them as declaring the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine of Christ's Godhead, or the doctrine of the Atonement, *and the like;* when, from the very beginning, *in perpetual harmony*, they professedly speak, not merely their own private sentiments, but the sentiments of the church at large, the† *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;*

* Faber on the Primitive Doctrine of Justification, page 47.

† The universal consent of Fathers and Councils, &c., or the rule "*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;*" does not appear to have been unknown to the Jewish school of tradition, if we may trust to the following observations in Allen's Modern Judaism, (chap. iii,) as stated to have been derived originally from Maimonides. "Whatever Joshua and the elders had received from Moses was admitted *without any controversy or disagreement;* but if there was any branch respecting which nothing had been delivered by Moses, the decision proper to be made, in such a case, was discovered by *fair inference from the original precepts*, by the help of some of *the thirteen rules given to Moses on Mount Sinai*, which are so many ways of argumentation to elicit the true sense of the law. *In some cases of this kind there was but one opinion*, and the decision was received with *universal consent;* whenever there was a difference of sentiment, *the opinion of the majority prevailed.*"—"When Joshua died, all the interpretations which he had received from Moses, together with all that had been made in his time, whether settled by *unanimous consent*, or determined by *the opinion of the majority*, were transmitted by him to the elders who survived him. Those elders conveyed them to the prophets, and by one prophet they were delivered to another; so that no age passed without inquiries being made into the meaning of the law, and conclusions being drawn from it; the men of every age taking the *determinations of their predecessors as*, the *foundations of their conclusions*. Now, respecting *the foundations received by tradition, there never was any disagreement down to the time of the men of the great synagogue*," &c. Among the various ordinances to be observed, as contained in the Mishna, were the following:—"Interpretations received from

I really, however mortifying such an opinion may be to modern self-conceit, cannot help thinking, that the authority of their interpretation considerably transcends the authority of any mere private interpretation, even of the enlightened nineteenth century." The learned author had previously observed, in the same chapter,—"It is somewhat remarkable, that the Church of England, notwithstanding she defines the doctrine of Justification after a manner altogether different from that which has been adopted by the Church of Rome, similarly appeals to antiquity as her voucher for primitive, and therefore accurate interpretation." To these two statements allow me to add a few more; and, first, one by Your Grace. (Essays, page 361.)—"We may, however, perversely refuse to take advantage of these wise provisions,* by exalting, like the Romanists, (and I am sorry to say, some Protestants of these days,) the Creeds, Formularies, &c. which are sanctioned by tradition, and by the enactments of a church, to *a level with the Scriptures.* Then, indeed, we incur the evils already spoken of, with the additional one of 'teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.' Such a system, accordingly, tends to foster that neglect of the study of Scripture, that averseness to labor in the investigation of truth,—that indolent, uninquiring acquiescence in what is ready prepared for acceptance, in the lump,—to which man is by nature so much disposed, and which the structure of the Christian Scriptures seems to have been expressly de-

Moses, which are either implied in the written law, or elicited from it by reasoning, and *these have never been controverted; but as soon as any one said, 'I have received it by tradition,' the point was settled.*" Again, "Opinions that had been formed by the thirteen ways of reasoning, and which were first controverted and afterwards *determined by the majority.*"—It appears also that the rule, *quod semper quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, was not unknown to the heathens, who pleaded it against Christians in favor of their idolatry. If it be replied, "We prove our tradition by Scripture;" the answer is, it is reasoning in a circle to prove tradition by Scripture, if, in so doing, we are allowed to interpret Scripture only by tradition. I will here add, that the consent of the Fathers appears to be sometimes spoken of as if it were a consent or agreement of their private sentiments; whereas it seems that, in general, they resigned all right to any private sentiments in regard to fundamental doctrines, and considered themselves *bound* to consent to that which others had handed to them on the authority of tradition. With regard to the doctrines alleged to be thus sanctioned by tradition, authors do not appear to be agreed; some confining them only to the Apostles' creed; others, including the Nicene; others, also, the Athanasian creed; and others, a variety of other doctrines, each according to his own particular views. Some authors, again, appear to consider the Nicene and Athanasian creeds only as a kind of interpretation of certain parts of the Apostles' creed.

* The omission, in Scripture, of a summary of Christian doctrine.

signed to guard against. And all this evil is incurred by reliance on an infallibility, (either of some particular Church, or some undefined universal Church,) *which, after all, is only imaginary.* When we inquire, *what* we are to receive as sanctioned by the unerring judgment of the Universal Church, the answer usually given, is, 'whatever has been believed, *always, every where,* and by all,' (quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;) but if those who give this answer,, are requested to make out a list of the articles of faith which fulfil these conditions, and to prove them to be such, they do not find it easy. They do, however, often find it easy to make an *unlearned* Christian believe, that what their church and their party hold, is to be received by him as possessing this claim."—To take another instance: speaking of the rule of faith adopted by the Roman Catholics in the interpretation of the Scriptures, Bishop Marsh observes:*—"It is represented as a *doctrina tradita,* handed down by the Fathers of the Church, who are considered as the depositories of this rule; whence it is inferred, that the expositions in which *they* agree, are the *true* expositions of Scripture. Now all this is mere matter of *opinion,* and is calculated solely to support the credit of the Church of Rome. There is not the slightest *historical* evidence that the apostles transmitted to posterity any rule but what is recorded in the New Testament. The Fathers, therefore, are precisely on the same footing, with respect to the *authority* of their interpretations, as the commentators of the *present* age. Nor, in fact, are they uniform in their interpretations, even in regard to doctrine, notwithstanding the agreement alleged by the Church of Rome; though *some* commentators may be selected, as well ancient as modern, which agree on particular points."†—

* Interpretation of the Bible.—Lecture i, page 274.

† In making these few quotations, my only object is to shew the *general reader* that the author of the Essays does not stand alone in his opinion. I have no desire to enter far into the revived controversy on the subject of tradition, as it is not necessary to the present argument. They who wish to read more upon this question, may consult the works of Middleton, Chillingworth, and Waterland; also, Vincent's Commonitory; the sermons of Hawkins, Keble, and Pearson; Newman's Popular Protestantism; Russell's Judgment of the Anglican Church; Palmer on the Church of Christ; the Via Media and Consensus Omnium, by members of the Oxford convocation; also Perceval's Christian Priesthood, &c., and though last, not least, an Inquiry into the Use of Church Authority and Tradition, &c., by J. M. Capes, B. A., of Baliol College, Oxford.

Many, however, of the foregoing authors, having attempted to establish the

Again, Mr. Chillingworth, who is no inferior authority, at least with *some* Protestants, observes, "I, for my part, after a long, and, as I verily believe and hope, impartial

authority of tradition, it is of importance to bear in mind the *moral* nature of an appeal to it, whatever be its decision, as the tribunal for determining the truth of Christian doctrine. It may be observed, then, that the authority or testimony of tradition is only external; and where a doctrine is inculcated and made to rest upon external authority, the belief in the doctrine, as founded upon this authority, is only external: and, so far as a church is composed of members who possess only an external faith, so far it is only an external church, and an external church is one that has a name that it lives, but is dead. Suppose, therefore, all the doctrines which it is alleged are sanctioned by tradition, were *true;* yet, if they are received only upon the authority of tradition, or the principle *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, the church which so receives them is a church only in name, having the form, but not the power of godliness. The same may be said of all appeals even to Scripture; for though a man could prove a thousand times, the doctrines of the church to be in *Scripture*, yet if they are not in *him*, if he has not the evidence or the witness of the Spirit within himself, to the truth of those doctrines, he is no real member of the church of Christ. Therefore, although all the doctrines of a church could be proved to be true, both from Scripture and from tradition, this would not prove that the church was really a church, or that its visitation was not nigh at hand; for, notwithstanding all this, there might be no truth in the church, and, as such, it might still be a desolation. It will be replied, "Are we, then, in support of the truth of a doctrine, to rest only on the internal evidence of the Spirit? Surely if we do so, every one will follow his own way, and claim the evidence of the Spirit for his own interpretations, however contradictory to those of another, who claims the same evidence." I answer, if the church has come to this, and many affirm that it has, it has come to its end. All unity produced by external means, is only an external unity, a unity that may exist where there is internal disunion; and where there is internal disunion, there is, so far, no real church. I have here supposed the case of the doctrines of the church to be true: but what if they are untrue? Certainly, doctrines which are untrue can have no internal witness of the Spirit to their being true, and, as such, external evidence is their proper and only basis: they who, therefore, plead the authority of the church and of tradition, as the foundation of certain doctrines, are only pursuing that course which a church would do, whose doctrines were incapable of affording any internal evidence of their truth, or which, in fine, were untrue. Hence, when persons are told, that there are certain doctrines upon which they have no right to exercise a private judgment, but that they must take them upon the authority of the church, I answer, 'They are told only what they would very naturally be told by a merely external church.' Besides, if, in regard to certain doctrines of a church, the right of private judgment ought to be taken away, to prevent its members from falling into heresies, it follows, that no person has any right to conclude those doctrines to be true, merely from the convictions of his own private judgment. It is inconsistent to admit the right of private judgment in another, when this judgment happens to coincide with the views of a given church; and to reject that right when the private judgment differs from them. If it be said, that we admit the right of private judgment, but it must not interfere with that of Fathers and Councils; what is this, but making internal convictions, which may be the operations of the Holy Spirit, subordinate to the decisions of councils? Besides, what makes so many afraid of the exercise of private judgment? Why should they discourage it? Why should they flee from it as from some fearful enemy? How much better would it be for them to seek to enlighten the judgment, than to destroy it. Can they think, that, when science is making such progress; when,

search of the true way to eternal happiness, do profess plainly that I cannot find any rest for the sole of my foot, but on this rock only (of the Scriptures.) I see plainly, and with my own eyes, that there are Popes against Popes, Councils against Councils, some Fathers against others, the same Fathers against themselves, a consent of Fathers of one age against a consent of Fathers of another age, the Church of one age against the Church of another age. *Traditive interpretations of Scripture are pretended, but there are few or none to be found,*" &c. (Religion of Protestants, chap. vi, art. 56.)

The fact, then, of uniformity of reception appears to be disputed. The *quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, is a rule, the existence of which is as much contested as the doctrines it is called upon to settle. Besides, even if it were not, its first principle, as a test of Divine truth, are inadmissible; inasmuch as they resolve themselves only into those of time, space, and custom—which are far more applicable to the fashions of the world, than to the doctrines of eternal life. The *always* of Divine truth is not the always of time, but of eternity: the *every where* is not that of space, which is finite, but of the Spirit of Him, who is omnipresent: and the *by all*, is not that of the many who are called, but of the few who are chosen. A truth,

day after day, upon all other subjects, appeals are made to the judgment, understanding, and reason; when man is constantly being roused and invited to the free exercise of his faculties; it will be possible to repress that freedom the moment he turns his attention to matters of religion? Perhaps, a great deal is laid to the charge of private judgment, which properly does not belong to it. Many claim this right on religious matters, who do not exercise it when they have it: they are too supine, or too prejudiced: they either make no attempt to understand what is submitted to them, or, in making the attempt, are carried away by their feelings. After all, therefore, that is said in favor of the right of private judgment by those who maintain it, or that is laid to its charge by those who deny it, I believe the right is comparatively but little exercised. Many pretend to exercise their *judgment*, who, in fact, do no such thing. One great evil of the present day, moreover, is carelessness and unconcern in matters of religion—a consequent readiness to leave the important subjects of religion to others, whose sole business they conceive it to be to judge of them; by which means, they save themselves all trouble of thinking of them, which they often do, under the pretext of orthodoxy, and unwillingness to interfere with the supposed office of the church. I will only add, that, considering the Internal Sense of the Word of God has not been known to the church, and that this sense is the only internal evidence we can have of the Divine Inspiration of every part of it, tradition has doubtless served a providential purpose, in preserving this Word to the present period; and, so far as the Divinity of this Word is not received, except upon the authority of tradition, so far, undoubtedly, tradition is allowed by Providence as a testimony to its Divine Inspiration: this testimony, however, is only *external*, and in proportion as the church rests upon it, it is only an—*external church*.

though only the alleged novelty of yesterday, may have in it more of durability, than a doctrine which has lasted from the time of the fall : though confined only to a single spot of earth, it may have in it more of the principle of ubiquity, than an opinion which has spread itself over the globe : though received only by one, it may have in it more of catholicity, than an opinion which has been received by one million. Indeed, to test the eternal truth of a doctrine by the number of hours it has lasted, as counted out by the clock; the universality of its nature, by the multitude of superficial miles over which it has extended, by the decrees of human authority, or by the number of voices who have proclaimed in its favor; is to employ a test which is worthy only of that which can be so tested. Let us, then, concede to the fashions of the world the principles of time, space, and custom; and reserve to ourselves the only characteristics of divine truth;—its intrinsic eternity, infinity, and universality.

But it is said, "if the true sense and doctrine of the Bible was not understood by any for so many centuries, it cannot be called at least a final revelation."*

Perhaps, in the ideas conveyed by the term revelation, there is a slight ambiguity. It is often used to convey one or both of two things ; either the thing communicated, or our apprehension of its nature. If it be meant to signify the thing communicated, of course, a thing may be communicated to us which we do not, therefore, necessarily, understand. The Apocalypse of St. John, for instance, commonly called the Book of Revelations, communicates, as many are willing to admit, a variety of things of the meaning of which they have no apprehension; and hence, there is no book of which the meaning more requires to be *revealed*, than the Book of *Revelation* itself. Still, in one sense, although a person may not understand the book, he

* "The more distinct and particular knowledge of those things, the study of which the apostle calls going on unto perfection, and of the prophetic parts of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil knowledge, may require very exact thought and careful consideration. The hindrances, too, of natural and of supernatural light and knowledge, have been of the same kind. *And, as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is not yet understood*, so, if it ever comes to be understood, before the restitution of all things and *without miraculous interpositions*, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at,—by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world." (Butler's Analogy, Part 2, chap. iii.)

may admit it to be a final revelation; but if by this he means to imply, that its meaning or interpretation is no further to be understood, then, undoubtedly, it is not a final revelation. Revelation, therefore, so far as the *book* itself is concerned, is final; so far as our *understanding* its contents is concerned, it is not final. This distinction, which I cannot but think will be readily admitted, removes the difficulty above stated. For when it is said, that the Bible was designed by the Almighty to convey such instruction as He judged needful for all, reference is evidently made to the book—the book as containing instruction, and which would fully answer its purposes as a *record* of the Divine Will, without its being necessarily *understood*. It is not the book that makes us understand, but the Holy Spirit that makes us understand the book; and I apprehend, that the understanding of the book is left to every man's option, and depends, in a measure, upon the means which are put in his power. The book, therefore, would answer its purpose as a means of conveying instruction, even though but few were willing to resort to the use of these means. It certainly contains truths needful for all; yet none are compelled to receive it: they may, if they will, reject it: still, although they reject it, the book, nevertheless, serves its purpose as a record of the Divine Will, and a testimony against them.

If, then, God has given us a book, the knowledge of whose truths is necessary to our salvation; and if, at the same time, we are not compelled to understand them, it follows that, notwithstanding our possession of the book, causes may operate to blind our eyes, and to prevent us, some in a greater, some in a less degree, from understanding the nature of its contents, and that, too, even in essential points.* The question, therefore is, What are these

* "It may be objected still farther, and more generally,—'The Scripture represents the world in a state of ruin, and Christianity as an expedient to recover it, to help in these respects where nature fails; in particular, to supply the deficiences of natural light. Is it credible, then, that so many ages should have been let pass, before a matter of such a sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to mankind; and then that it should be made known to so small a part of them? Is it conceivable, that this supply should be so very deficient, should have the like obscurity and doubtfulness, be liable to the like perversions, in short, lie open to all the like objections, as the light of nature itself?' Without determining how far this fact is so, I answer, it is by no means incredible that it might be so, if the light of nature and of revelation be from the same hand. Men are naturally liable to diseases, for which God, in his good Providence, has provided natural remedies. But remedies existing in nature have been unknown to mankind for many ages; are known but to few

causes?—and is it the fact that they have so operated? Now Your Grace will admit, that all these causes may be considered as centred in one, namely, a natural and carnal mind. As to the question, whether this cause has operated, so as to produce a diversity of doctrines; whether it has made it no easy task for some to determine what doctrines have been uniformly received, and induced others to resort to the opinions of men, rather than to the Spirit of Truth;—these, it appears, are tolerably certain facts. Whether, again, it has produced a diversity of incongruous modes of interpretation, is a question we now proceed to consider.

With respect to the quotation about to be made, it is to be observed, that it does not convey the sentiments merely of an individual, but of an existing class of the Protestant community. I refer to a work entitled "The History of the Rise and Early Progress of Christianity;"* and, in reading the quotation, it will be desirable to mark the several gradations by which, it seems, since the Reformation, or the period when the church began to profess itself to be founded upon the Scriptures only, a highly respected Divine of the Church of England maintains, that *the estimation in which the inspiration of the Scriptures has been held, has been gradually on the decline*. For the convenience of the reader, the several stages are numbered.

1. "Whilst Christians, of all denominations, have ever agreed in admitting the *inspiration* of the New Testament, on no one point, perhaps, has there been a greater diversity of opinion, than on the character of this inspiration. On this diversity of view, one general remark may be hazarded, and it will be found, I think, warranted by historical fact. In proportion as inspiration has been made to

now; probably many valuable ones are not known yet. Great has been, and is, the obscurity and difficulty in the nature and application of them. Circumstances seem often to make them very improper, where they are absolutely necessary. It is after long labor and study, and many unsuccessful endeavors, that they are brought to be as useful as they are; after high contempt and absolute rejection of the most useful we have; and after disputes and doubts which have seemed to be endless. The best remedies, too, when unskilfully, much more, if dishonestly, applied, may produce new diseases; and with the rightest application, the success of them is often doubtful. In many cases, they are not at all effectual; where they are, it is often very slowly; and the application of them, and the necessary regimen accompanying it, is, not uncommonly, so disagreeable, that some will not submit to them; and satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they would, it is not certain whether it would be successful." (Butler's Analogy, chap. iii, part 2.)

* By the Rev. S. Hinds, M. A., Vice Principal of St. Alban's Hall, Oxford. Appendix, vol. ii, Article, Inspiration of Scripture.

approach to a complete inditing of the Scriptures, the Scriptures have been neglected. *The consequence of the study and application of the Bible, from the period of the Reformation, has been, gradually and progressively to limit the extent of inspiration;* and, by so doing, to vindicate the holy character of what is unquestionably of Divine origin, and to make the application of the rule of faith more sure. It was only perhaps in the worst ages of superstition, that an entire inspiration of matter, words, and composition generally, like that asserted of the Koran, was universally contended for. At the period of the Reformation, Luther placed the *first limit* on this view, and contended that the matter only was of Divine origin, the composition human, &c.

2. "With the gradual progress of inquiry, however, and the more diligent use of Scripture, a *further limitation* came in time to be put on scriptural inspiration. It became a question, whether even all the *matter* of the Bible was to be considered as having the stamp of Divine truth on it. The progress of natural philosophy made it impossible, that any thing but blind superstition should assert this character for all physical facts; and the whole branch of topics which fall under that head, have been accordingly excluded by a great part of Christians, &c.

3. "But one portion of the matter of the Bible, its natural philosophy, having been once excluded from the sphere of inspiration, in the view of so many learned and pious Christians, *further doubts*, on similar grounds, have been suggested respecting the statement of those historical facts, which belong not to sacred, but to profane history. It has been justly contended, that similar difficulties are obviated by excluding *profane history*, as by excluding natural philosophy; and that there is no more ground for maintaining the inspiration of the sacred writers in the one, than in the other case, &c.

4. "It would lead to much more discussion than is compatible with a mere note, to enter into the general questions of what *further limitations* may and *ought* to be put on the inspired character of Scripture. I will only briefly state, that the following may perhaps, on reflection, be found not inconsistent with the purest view of God's written word. It may be fairly questioned, then, first, whether even its *sacred history* is inspired. For although, wherever a point of faith or practice is involved in the historical record, inspiration must be supposed, (else the application of the

record, as an infallible rule, must be abandoned,) yet, where this is not the case, there seems to be no necessity for supposing inspiration; and by not supposing it, several difficulties in the attempt to harmonize the sacred historians are removed."

5. Again: "Proceeding still on the principle, that the truths to be believed, the material of faith, is the point to which the control or suggestions of inspiration must have been directed, and to which alone it is necessary for constituting the Bible the rule of faith, that it should be directed, the *reasoning* of the inspired writers may be considered safely as *their own.* I do not mean to impugn the reasoning of any one passage in the apostolical writings; but were any found open to it, the circumstance would not, according to this view, affect the inspired character and authority of the work. The *assertions*, not the *proofs*, are the proper objects of unqualified assent," &c. &c. &c.

While, however, there are authors in the Protestant Church, who think the only way of vindicating the Scriptures is that of indiscriminately lowering their inspiration, there are others on the opposite side, who consider the only way of doing so, is that of indiscriminately exalting it: and it is with pain I add, there is as much confusion on this side as on the other. A modern eminent writer,* who advocates the highest degree of Divine inspiration for all the books now commonly composing our Scripture, says, "We have no means to discover the inspiration of the Scriptures, but by historical testimony; it cannot be discovered by any internal evidence." "Internal evidence," he says, "may verify the fact of inspiration, but could never discover it." And how, according to him, does internal evidence verify the fact of inspiration? By its moral and spiritual effects upon the mind. True. But in what particular are these moral and spiritual effects distinguishable from those produced by other pious writings? In none, so far as we are told. To what extent, then, are we to rely upon these moral and spiritual effects, as an internal evidence of the Divine Inspiration of the Scriptures? The learned author thus answers the question.† "Richard Baxter seems to have thought more judiciously on this subject than some of his contemporaries. For my part, says he, I could never

* Dr. Chalmers. Miraculous and Internal Evidences of the Christian Revelation. Book iv, chap. 3.

† Page 405, vol. ii.

boast of any such testimony, or light of the Spirit, nor reason neither, which, without human testimony, would have made me believe, that the Book of Canticles is canonical and written by Solomon, and the Book of Wisdom apocryphal and written by Philo. Nor could I have known all or ANY historical books such as *Joshua*, *Judges*, Ruth, *Samuel*, *Kings*, Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, &c., to be written by Divine inspiration, but by tradition." When Baxter, therefore, urges tradition, as the evidence of Inspiration, what does Calvin say? Let us hear Dr. Chalmers,* "Calvin antedated the matter wrong, when, in his controversy with the learned of the Church of Rome in behalf of the Scriptures, he made appeal to that internal evidence which is felt and appreciated by the unlearned; at the time when, fighting his adversaries with their own weapons, he should have urged the argument critically and historically. He has charged it as preposterous to plead this argument as distinct from the internal evidence; but we should reverse the proposition, and call it preposterous, in this matter, to place the internal before the external evidence." Now, what is the external evidence? Tradition. Here, then, we find it maintained, by one who advocates the highest degree of Scripture Inspiration, that it is preposterous for the Church, as a public body, to place the internal evidence of this inspiration before the external evidence of Tradition; and why? Because, it is declared to be inadequate to a discovery of the divinity of, at least, a considerable portion of the Scriptures. It is true, the learned author adds, "In the Christianization of individuals, the experimental probation is the only one resorted to, and the only one realized by the great majority of the household of faith;" still no definite signs, by which to verify the fact of inspiration, are given us; hence we cannot help calling to mind the statement of another distinguished writer, who observes, "If it be said, that pious Protestants have the witness in themselves, as a sure test to their own hearts of the truth of Scripture, the fact is undeniable; and a sufficient and consoling proof is it to them, that the *doctrines* of Scripture are true; but it does not prove, that the very book we call the Bible was written, and all of it written, by inspiration; nor does it allow us to dispense with the external evidence of tradition, assuring us that it is so." (Newman's Romanism and Popular Protestantism, page

* Page 418.

43.) Others, again, affirm that tradition has nothing to do with the inspiration of Scripture, but is an evidence only of the authenticity and genuineness of the writings of which Scripture is composed. It is obvious, then, that there is no one settled principle in the church, with regard either to the discovery, or the verification of the fact, of Divine Inspiration. Now, if those who advocate the highest views of Scriptural Inspiration make admissions such as we have quoted, of course those who adopt lower views of that Inspiration, and, much more, those who adopt the lowest, cannot be supposed to consider the Scripture as invested with any higher authority. Indeed, the advocates of these respective systems seem to regard each other as destroying the Divine authority of Scripture, while intending to uphold it. What is the consequence? the whole subject is converted into one mass of confusion. The term *Inspiration*, and the expression *Word of God*, are used in scarcely any definite sense; the very canon of Scripture itself is called into question; and even with regard to those books which are admitted to be inspired and canonical, there is no end to the diversity of interpretations. Thus, in regard to the canon of Scripture, it is observed by a modern writer* of no inferior repute, but who, I believe, is not a member of the Church of England,—"Next in point of importance and interest to the fact, that the sacred writers were inspired, are the questions, What are those books, on behalf of which the claim of Divine Inspiration is advanced? And what is the evidence on which we believe, that a certain specific number are exclusively entitled to this distinction? It is notorious that nothing like unanimity respecting these points prevails. Not only have they been keenly agitated among theologians of different periods; but collections of books, differing more or less in point of size and number, yet all comprehended under the general name of the Holy Bible, have obtained in several of the churches in Christendom. The Scriptures, as generally received by us, differ from those in accredited circulation among the Lutherans; the books to which inspiration is ascribed by that body, are not numerically the same with those for which it is claimed by the Roman Catholics. The catalogues of sacred writings sanctioned in the Romish and Greek churches, also, differ from each other; while the Armenian Bible contains more books than are to be found in any

* Dr. Henderson on Divine Inspiration, Lecture ix, page 449.

other. With respect, indeed, to the books which are commonly circulated in this empire as Divine, and which accord with those composing the Hebrew Bible and the Greek New Testament, there exists no disagreement in the creeds of the different churches. In all and each of these creeds, the claims of the whole Scripture, to the extent in which it is approved by us, are unhesitatingly admitted. But, most of the foreign churches have appended to them, intermixed with them, or sanctioned by promoting their joint circulation, other books or portions, which possess no claim to inspiration. *On the other hand, the demands made on our religious regard, by some of the books of the Old and New Testament, have been called in question, both in ancient and modern times.*"

With regard, again, to the interpretation of Scripture, Bishop Marsh, in his first Lecture upon this subject, having observed that Tradition was the acknowledged rule of faith, guiding the Roman Church in its Interpretations, adds, that when the early Reformers abandoned the guidance of Tradition, they supplied its place by "Reason and Learning." What Reason and Learning have done for the Scriptures, we have been told in a foregoing extract upon the gradual limitation of their extent of inspiration. In regard to interpretation, however, the learned prelate observes, page 271, "If the interpretation of Scripture were easy and obvious, there would be little or no diversity in the explanations, which different commentators have given of the same passage. But, if we compare the Greek with the Latin commentators, we shall frequently find such a variety of interpretation, as would appear almost impossible to be extracted from the same text. If we compare the Jewish commentators, either with the Greek, or with the Latin, we shall find as great a variety, though a variety of a different kind. If we compare our English commentators with any of the preceding, we shall find no diminution in the variety of interpretation. Nor do we find uniformity, either among commentators of the same language, or even among commentators of the same church. It is true, that in all things relating to *doctrine* and *discipline*, the church of Rome preserved, during several ages, an uniformity of interpretation, by the commentary which was called the *Glossa Ordinaria*. But when the revival of learning had opened new sources of intelligence, and the Reformation had restored the right of unfettered exposition, the *Glossa Ordinaria* was exchanged for *new* systems of interpretation,

from Luther and Melancthon, from Calvin and Beza, from Grotius and from Spanheim."

With regard to the doctrine and discipline of the church of Rome, maintained by its uniformity of interpretation, the learned prelate afterwards observes, page 274, Lect. 1, "There is not the slightest historical evidence that the apostles transmitted to posterity any rule but what is recorded in the New Testament. The Fathers, therefore, are precisely on the same footing with respect to the authority of their interpretations, as the commentators of the present age. Nor, in fact, are they uniform in their interpretations even in regard to doctrine, notwithstanding the agreement alleged by the church of Rome; though some commentators may be selected, as well ancient and modern, which agree on particular points."

Now, if a true church be built upon true doctrine; if true doctrine be built only upon a true interpretation of Scripture; if a true interpretation of Scripture be founded only on true ideas of inspiration; and if our views of the inspiration of the Scripture constitute thus the very foundation of the church; we cannot but conclude, when reflecting upon statements such as we have adduced, that "the foundations of the church are shaken." I will not say whether a person would be right or wrong in his application of the passage; but when he meets with a fact answering to a description, can he avoid associating the description with the fact, and so, repeating the words of the Scripture, "The sun shall go down over the prophets, and the day shall be dark over them."* (Micah, iii, 6.)—I know it may be said, differ as the church may upon the interpretation and doctrines of Scripture, there is one thing upon which all are agreed, that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Now I have great pleasure in believing, that there have been, and are, many pious and

* If, in the present letter, I have not quoted Scripture so much as some might think I ought to have done, it is because, adopting a different principle of inspiration, we necessarily adopt a different mode of interpretation; and, consequently, consider Scripture as often meaning something very different from the sense in which it is commonly understood. Thus, for instance, they who maintain the permanency of the Protestant, or of what *they*, no doubt conscientiously, call, the infallible universal church, partly found their opinions on these words of our Savior, "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world,"—a text we should quote as proving the end of that which they maintain is not to come to an end. For by the end of the world, we consider to be meant the end of the age or dispensation—an interpretation which is actually given to the words by our opponents, when applied to the end of the Jewish dispensation.

holy men in the Christian community, with whom, therefore, so far, we hold no controversy; but yet I believe, that if holiness depends upon our doing the truth, the nature of our actions will depend upon the nature of our principles, and, consequently, that there will be as much difference in the nature of actions, as there is in the nature of the principles upon which we act. When, therefore, in addition to the confusion prevailing in regard to the inspiration of Scripture, the interpretation of Scripture, and the doctrines of Christianity, we add also that which prevails with regard to good works, or to the nature of holiness in outward life and conduct, will not a reflecting person have a strong tendency to call to mind those words in Isaiah, (xxxxiv, 11,) "He shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion."? That the line of confusion is stretched upon the Christian community, who ever doubted?

I have no wish to draw a picture of what the state of the church either is, or has been. More is offered to my acceptance than I am willing to avail myself of. I shall merely quote the description given by a distinguished member of the church, who, so far as I am aware, has no repute, on that account, for being an enthusiast. "In truth," says he, "the whole course of Christianity from the first, when we come to examine it, is but one series of troubles and disorders. Every century is like every other, and to those who live in it seems worse than all times before it. The church is ever ailing, and lingers on in weakness, 'always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in her body.' Religion seems ever expiring, schisms dominant, *the light of Truth dim*, its adherents scattered.* The cause of Christ is ever in its last agony; as though it were but a question of time, whether it fails finally this day, or another. The saints are ever all but failing from the earth, and Christ all but coming; and thus, the day of judgment is literally ever at hand; and it is our duty ever to be looking out for it, not disappointed that we have so often said, 'now is the moment;' and that, at the last, contrary to our expectation, Truth has somewhat rallied. Such is God's will, gathering in His elect, first one and then another, by little and little, in the interyals of sunshine between storm and storm, or snatching them from the surge of evil, even when the waters rage

* *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus.*

most furiously. Well may prophets cry out, 'How long will it be, O Lord! to the end of these wonders? how long will this mystery proceed? how long will this perishing world be sustained by the feeble lights which struggle for existence in its unhealthy atmosphere?' God alone knows the day and the hour when that will at length be, which he is ever threatening; meanwhile, thus much of comfort do we gain from what has been hitherto; not to despond, not to be dismayed, not to be anxious at the troubles which encompass us. They have ever been; they ever shall be; they are our portion;—'The floods are risen, the floods have lift up their voice, the floods lift up their waves. The waves of the sea are mighty, and rage horribly, but yet the Lord who dwelleth on high is mightier.' "—(Romanism and Popular Protestantism, by J. H. Newman, B. D., Fellow of Oriel, *conclusion.*)

If, then, such be the state of things, more particularly if, under the present dispensation of the church, there be no hope of any amelioration of her circumstances, may it not be fairly asked, whether there be any enthusiasm or fanaticism in supposing, that such a state of the church cannot be a matter of indifference to Him who first founded the church; that the Lord of the vineyard would have prevented these evils, had it been consistent with man's free agency; that, if He could not have prevented them, He would provide a remedy for them? We have no reason to think that human tradition, or human reason, or human learning, will, of themselves, do more for the church than they have already done. Tradition has tried its iron yoke, and the result is—the lowest bondage. Reason and learning have set the faculties free, and the result is—confusion. Is there so far, then, no *a priori* argument in favor of an additional revelation? Many, both in the Established Church and out of it, who know nothing of the writings of Swedenborg, and whose general orthodoxy would not be doubted by their respective followers, have thought that some additional revelation is requisite; nay, that in the Scriptures it is actually promised.

But it is said by some, though reason has failed, why may we not pray to God to enlighten it? He has promised to do so, if we faithfully ask him; and, in this case, what is the use of a further revelation? Suppose, however, it should happen that this revelation should be the very source from which our reason was designed to be enlightened! Nay, it is replied, God's design is to leave the reasoning

faculties free, and a revelation interferes with their freedom. I answer, Why should we presume this? Even if it were true, shall we be content to live in moral darkness, in order that our reasoning faculties may be left free? But we do not admit the truth of the objection; for may not revelation enable us the better to exercise our rational powers, instead of necessarily superseding them? Are not the many excellent observations in the Essays a proof, that revelation, instead of destroying reason, may strengthen it, and afford it a more ample scope for exercise? If it were an argument against another revelation, that it would interfere with the exercise of our rational powers, such as they are, and that the very darkness in which we live enables us the more to resort to the free exercise of reason, then might we not presume that life and immortality ought never to have been brought to light? for that, as long as men were in the dark as to the immortality of the soul, they were enabled freely to exercise their reason, and come to various conclusions, or rather conjectures, or rather doubts, upon the subject, or, it might be, positive denials; but no matter, so long as the reasoning faculties were left free, to arrive at any results they might think proper. There is, however, one point of view, in which a revelation may be considered as interfering with the free exercise of reason; for in human reason, unregenerated, there is a root of self-hood, the destruction of which is supposed to be the destruction of all freedom of the rational faculties. With such a reason, revelation doubtless comes into collision. Even what such a reason admits to be true, it nevertheless rejects, if the discovery of the truth was not its own. Hence, what vain speculations will it not pursue with avidity, if they are but its own offspring!—what divine wisdom will it not reject, if it comes not in the form of its own self-intelligence!

Supposing, then, a revelation to be made, in what is it reasonable to presume that it would consist? Most persons, probably, will agree, that the Word of God is sufficient to guide man in the way of salvation, provided there be a right understanding of that Word. What, therefore, is it more reasonable to presume, than that, if a revelation should be made, it would consist in communicating a better knowledge of that Word?* It is obvious, however, that if a right

* The views of the nature of the Inspiration of the Scriptures have been frequently so low, and the authority of tradition has been so much exalted, that it is very questionable whether many of the Protestant Church, in the present day, will not refuse assent to this position. If the Scriptures are such as many con-

knowledge of the Word of God depend upon right views of inspiration and right principles of interpretation, the revelation would consist, either of some new principles relating to these subjects, or some improvement of the old principles. In this case, the newness of the interpretations given to Scripture, and their opposition to the doctrines popularly received, so far from being an argument against their being a divine revelation, is only what, in such a case, might be reasonably expected; for if the revelation alleged to be made, with the view of introducing unity into the church, resolved itself only into principles which had already brought confusion, then, however the more disposed some persons might be to receive it on this account, there would be good reason for the conclusion, that it was of a non-practical character, or, rather, that it was helping to increase the mischief it was intended to remove. Now Swedenborg has shewn, how all the evils which have originated in the church, have arisen from its tendency to merely natural and carnal principles; how these principles have produced, not only contradictory interpretations of Scripture, but untrue and degraded views of the nature of Divine Inspiration itself; and we appeal to fact, in confirmation of what he has stated.

Many authors, perhaps even most, consider that the Inspiration of the Word of God consists in the divine influence exercised upon the minds of the writers; whereas, Swedenborg considers that, however conjoined, they are two distinct things. One consequence of the former view is, that where the writer is acquainted with the historical facts he records from his own personal observation, or the testimony of others, he is considered to be in no need of inspiration to enable him to record them; hence, that those parts of Scripture, the writing of which may be accounted for upon this principle, are virtually without inspiration; while other divines, who are justly alarmed for the authority of Scripture when placed upon this basis, claim for the sacred writers, indiscriminately, a degree of supernatural influence which their opponents rightly argue it is impossible to maintain. Hence the necessity under which they labor, in settling the authority of Scripture, of resorting to

sider them to be, they are not *worth* any further revelation; they are but as a candle in the temple, which has almost burnt to the socket, and whose light is on the verge of becoming extinct. No wonder that such persons should smile at the idea of an inward and spiritual sense, capable of being derived from their contents.

tradition, or external evidence, where they are so wholly at variance on the subject of any other. Now we humbly submit, that these disputes originate* from the error, of confounding the inspiration of the writer with the inspiration of the thing written; of mistaking the inspiration of the Word of God, for the inspiration of the penmen who recorded it. The two questions we believe to be wholly distinct. If we say the Word of God is inspired, we say what we mean; that the thing written is inspired, independently of the mind of the penman who wrote it. And in what does the inspiration of this Word consist?—In what *can* it consist, but in the Divine Wisdom it contains, which alone giveth spiritual life? "The words which I speak unto you," saith our Savior, "they are spirit and they are life." Here is the real principle of their inspiration. It is the revelation of this Divine Wisdom that is truly the second coming of the Word. In the first coming, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us in person; in his second coming, he dwelleth among us in spirit; and this second coming in power and great glory, though within clouds, is the great and final day in which, as King of kings and Lord of lords, the Word of God goeth forth, conquering and to conquer.†

* A bare enumeration of the theories of inspiration would, perhaps, occupy a volume. The various aspects under which it is viewed, are as different as the various theories. A few writers, indeed, appear to include in their definition of inspiration, the truths it conveys; but still these truths they often consider as identical with correctly stated historical facts, dates, and so forth; in fine, with the lowest species of truth in the merely natural mind. Ordinary providential circumstances, oriental imagery, the use of hyperboles, and an almost unbounded license of the natural imagination, are also included under the comprehensive term of inspiration; not to mention that the expression *Word of God* is frequently used by writers in a sense so lax, that it is not always easy to determine its meaning; and in many cases, where its meaning is determinable, it obviously implies nothing more than, *the word of man*, considered as in accordance with the Divine Word.

† In the Evidence of Christianity, by the pious and excellent author, the present Bishop of Chester, where he is speaking of the first establishment of the Christian religion, and the antecedent probability that it would be authenticated by divine *miraculous* interposition, I find, in chap. 10, page 321, the following note.—"The cases of successful imposture or enthusiasm which sometimes astonish us, are no exception to this argument. Such persons as Swedenborg and Southcote do not introduce a new religion, but stand forward as interpreters of a religion before established on very different grounds; and because that is believed, they are listened to. If the religion were not already believed, these persons would gain no attention. The apostles raised Christianity out of nothing, and against every thing." Now I would respectfully observe, that where persons see in the dark, objects the most dissimilar cannot be discriminated one from the other; not however to pursue this subject, it may be added, that in this note there appears to be a triple error. First, The Internal Sense of the Holy Word, as revealed to Swedenborg, is absolutely the opening of a new dis-

The written Word, therefore, does not derive its inspiration from the writer, but from the Living Word Himself. This is the principle upon which we consider the canon of Scripture to be settled, *independently of any authority of tradition.* This is the principle upon which we steer perfectly clear of all the controversies upon the subject in the present day. This principle also furnishes us with a key to interpretation, and this key is analogy or correspondence, which is a distinct, definite, and tangible method, by which to determine, upon *internal evidence*, the Divine Inspiration of every part of the Word of God. We maintain, then, the genuine books of Scripture to be the written Word, even as the Divine Humanity of the Lord is the living Word; the consequence is, we believe the written Word of God to be as far above all other books, as the Divine Humanity of the Lord to be above the humanity of any created being. This Word is the foundation of the church of the New Jerusalem, the rock upon which it is built, against which the gates of hell shall not prevail.

Supposing, then, a revelation to be made, of the kind we have here described, we may presume that it would be one which must have a direct relation to the improvement of our life and conduct. Here, however, I am met by the objection, that the writings of Swedenborg have little or no intelligible reference to practice. Why have they not? I may ask. Because practice, in general, has little or no intelligible reference to them. For practice, we would observe, is of two kinds; the one relating to the mind, the other relating to the body; the one relating to the formation of right principles; the other to the performance of right actions. It is a maxim with Swedenborg, that no man can perform a right action except upon right principles; and hence, that it is of the utmost importance to practice, that right principles

pensation; a dispensation as different from the former, as the Christian dispensation was different from the Jewish. Secondly, it is not always believed, because Christianity is already believed, but not unfrequently because the corruptions of Christianity are such as to have begun to produce infidelity; and hence, it has been the glory of the New Dispensation to reclaim many, not who previously believed in the received doctrines of Christianity, but who did not believe in them at all. Thirdly, with all due deference I would submit, that the apostles did not raise Christianity out of nothing, though against every thing; for the Old Testament is the Gospel as much as the New, and of this Gospel the Jews were in possession. The difference between the coming of the Word in person, and his coming in spirit, is, that, in the latter case, the evidence of his mission is,—not miraculous, but moral; and is to be seen and felt in the entire regeneration of our nature, as produced by the power of—Truth. "These signs shall follow them that believe," &c. &c. &c.

should be first laid down. His writings, therefore, may be said to form a book of principles; principles which relate to a practice that *is* not, and which, in this sense, are undoubtedly not practical; although they relate to a practice which ought to be, and are, in this sense, most highly practical. If the practice existing in the present day be right, then, certainly, inasmuch as the works of Swedenborg do not assist us in this practice, they are not to be considered practical. To a man of the world, that only is practical which enables him to practise the ways of the world; and any thing which will not bear upon *this* practice, is to him not practical; for, with him, the only criterion of what is practical, is that which is generally practised,—*quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus;* and if any thing be told him which in itself is right, but which is not generally practised, he immediately receives as speculative. Now, it is admitted, that the principles of Swedenborg relate to that which is not practised by the church, the reason of which we have already seen; for the two things to which the internal sense of the Word refers, as interpreted by Swedenborg, are the glorification of the Lord's Humanity, and the regeneration of the soul, the former being the archetype of the latter. Now, the Divine Humanity of the Lord, as we have seen, is denied; hence the regeneration of the soul, as founded upon that doctrine, is also denied; and the process by which, under any circumstances, regeneration is effected, is declared to be an inscrutable mystery. Whether Swedenborg's principles are true or not, is here the question; I only say, that it is very natural to consider a work which treats entirely of what is either denied, or is unknown as having little or no intelligible reference to practice; and this, I think, will be seen to be the true reason for which it is considered to be non-practical. What is more unintelligible to a great portion of mankind than a spiritual life? and, consequently, what appears to them less practical, and more unintelligible, than the truths which relate to it? Should any one attempt to describe that of which another could as yet form no idea, would not the description appear to him to be obscure or unintelligible, and its import non-practical? Yet spiritual life is the sole subject of Swedenborg's writings, and surely it has its laws, its distinct stages, as well as natural life; but who has hitherto ventured clearly to point them out? If spiritual life be the life of the will and understanding, if it be thus a voluntary and intellectual life; it must be a life which is willed and under-

stood. It must be understood, in order to be willed; for no one can will to do that of which he knows and understands nothing. Yet, I ask it with all possible deference and submission, what does the church know concerning the states and stages of spiritual life? Is not the subject avowed to be a profound mystery? How, then, can we say of an author who attempts to unfold this mystery of godliness, nay, who has, as I may presume until it is disproved, unfolded it, however unintelligible it may appear to some, that there is nothing practical in his principles, or nothing peculiar in his views of practice? It will be granted that the knowledge of the laws of the human mind is a practical knowledge; else why do we read and recommend the writings of various authors upon the subject? Now, what these authors have attempted with regard to the natural faculties of the mind, Swedenborg has effected with regard to the spiritual; and not only with regard to the spiritual, but with regard to the natural also. Is it a useful and practical undertaking to unfold the laws of the natural mind; and shall an attempt, at least to unfold the laws of the spiritual mind, have, necessarily, little or no intelligible reference to practice? Is man, in the cultivation of his natural faculties, to be guided by the strictest rules; and the moment he enters upon the cultivation of his spiritual faculties, to be abandoned to his feelings, or left to adventure? Have natural things their laws, and spiritual things none? Is it nothing to unfold the nature of heavenly affections and thoughts, to mark our progress in the spiritual life, and thus to walk with our eyes open on the road that leads to the New Jerusalem? Had the subjects of which Swedenborg treats been well understood, there would have been little or no occasion for his works; since they would be only the republication of what was previously known. But may not the very circumstance of these subjects not being understood, or being conceived as having little or no intelligible reference to practice, tend to show only how loud was the call for his works; since truths the most practical, nay, of the most awful importance, had come to be considered as wholly unintelligible, or having little or no relation to man's life or conduct?

Allow me, then, most respectfully to submit, that a brief but fair answer has been given to the objections to the system of Swedenborg,* so far as relates to the particular part of

* It is to be observed, that I omit the subject of conjugal love, which is one treated of by Swedenborg in a manner so different from that in which it has been

it under discussion. I will, therefore, conclude this portion of the argument with a few extracts from his writings, illustrative of those principles we have been considering; and showing how the doctrine of regeneration, as explained by him, may, indeed, to some, be unintelligible, how it may become intelligible, and what is its peculiar relation to practice.

"They who deny any thing, as they who deny the internal sense of the Word, when they dispute or contend, must needs dispute or contend about the *existence* of such a thing. It is well known, that several disputes at this day go no farther than this. But so long as men remain in debate whether a thing exist, and whether it be so, it is impossible to make any advance into any thing of wisdom; for in the very thing which is the subject of debate, there are innumerable particulars, which cannot be seen, so long as the thing itself is not acknowledged; inasmuch as all and singular the things appertaining thereto, are in such case unknown. Modern erudition scarce advances beyond these limits of debate, viz. whether a thing exist, and whether it be so; and, of consequence, there is an exclusion from the intelligence of truth. As, for example, he who merely contends whether there exists an internal sense of the Word, cannot possibly see the innumerable, yea, indefinite things which are contained in the internal sense. Again, he who disputes whether charity be any thing in the church, and whether or no the things of faith be not the all thereof, cannot possibly know the innumerable, yea, the indefinite, things which are contained in charity; but remains altogether in ignorance of what charity is. The case is the same with regard to a life after death, the resurrection of the dead, the last judgment, the existence of heaven and hell. They who only dispute whether such things exist, stand out of the doors of wisdom so long as they dispute, and are like persons who only knock at the door, and cannot even look into the magnificent palaces of wisdom; and, what is surprising, people of this description fancy themselves wise in comparison with others, and so much the wiser in proportion to their greater skill in debating whether a thing be so, and especially in confirming themselves that it is not so; when yet the simple, who are principled in good, and whom such disputants despise, can perceive in a moment, without any dispute, much more without learned controversy, both

generally viewed, that, had I attempted to impart a just idea of it, this letter must have extended to double its length. Were the principles he advocates upon this subject alone, carried into effect, they would produce an entire revolution in the conduct, motives, and moral sentiments of society.

the existence of the thing, and also its nature and quality. These latter have a common or general sense of the perception of truth; whereas the former have extinguished this sense, by such things as incline them first to determine whether the thing exists. The Lord speaks both of the former and of the latter, when he says, 'I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and revealed them unto babes.'

"10,551. They who are in illustration, when they read the Word, see it from within; for their internal is open, and the internal, when open, is the light of heaven. This light flows in and enlightens, although man is ignorant of it. The reason why he is ignorant of it, is, because that light flows in into the knowledges which are in man's memory, and those knowledges are in natural light; and whereas man thinks from those knowledges as from himself, he cannot apperceive the influx; nevertheless, he may know, from various proofs, that he was in illustration. Howbeit, every one is deceived who believes himself to be in illustration, if he doth not love to know truth for the sake of truth, and for the sake of the good of life, thus, who doth not love Divine Truth for the sake of life; since to live according to Divine Truths from the Word, is to love the Lord; and from the Lord, when he is loved, comes all illustration. But they who have not for an end a life according to Divine Truths from the Word, but regard honor, gain and reputation, as ends, and thus the Divine Truths from the Word as means, cannot, in any wise, be in any illustration; for this latter end is worldly and corporeal, and not spiritual and celestial, and on this account it closes the internal man; in which case, no light can flow in from heaven and illustrate. If these believe that they are in illustration when they read the Word, they are altogether deceived; for they do not think from heaven, but from the world; thus, not from the Lord, but from themselves; and so far as they think from themselves and from the world, so far they think from natural light separate from heavenly light; and natural light separate from heavenly light, is mere thick darkness in things spiritual. In case these persuade themselves that they have seen any thing from illustration, it is a fallacy; for they perceive whether a thing be true, from no other source than from others by confirmations; which is to see truth from without and not from within, or to see it from persuasive faith. Persons of such a character may see what is false as what

is true, and what is true as what is false; also, what is evil as what is good, and what is good as what is evil. . . . The man whose internal is open, perceives the Word spiritually; but this he is ignorant of whilst he lives in the world; because his spiritual thought flows in into the natural in the external man, and there presents itself to be seen. Nevertheless, that interior thought is what illustrates, and by which is effected influx from the Lord. Some of the learned, also, by looking into their own thoughts, and, by reflection on the occasion, have observed, that there is given with man interior thought which doth not appear; wherefore the ideas of that thought they have called immaterial and intellectual, which they have distinguished from the ideas of exterior thought which appear, calling these latter natural and material. But they knew not, that the ideas of interior thought are spiritual, and that when they flow down, they are turned into natural, and appear under another species and under another habit. From these considerations it may, in some measure, be manifest, in what manner influx is effected, by which is illustration."

"5398. They who are of the church at this day, are so little acquainted with any thing respecting regeneration, that it can scarcely be called any acquaintance at all. They do not even know this, that regeneration continues through the whole course of the life of him who is regenerated, and that it is continued in the other life; also, that the arcana of regeneration are so innumerable, that scarcely the ten thousandth part of them can be known to the angels; and that those which the angels know, are the things which constitute their intelligence and wisdom. The reason why they who are of the church at this day know so little concerning regeneration, is, because they speak so much concerning the remission of sins and concerning justification; and because they believe that sins are remitted in an instant; and some, that they are wiped away as filth from the body by water; and that man is justified by faith alone, or by the confidence of one moment. The reason why the men of the church believe thus, is, because they do not know what sin or evil is; for had they known this, they would know that sins cannot be wiped away from any one; but that they are separated or cast aside, to prevent their rising up when man is kept in good by the Lord. Also, that this cannot be effected, unless evil be continually cast out, and this by means which are in number indefinite, and

for the most part ineffable. They in the other life, who have carried with them the foregoing opinion, that man is justified in an instant by faith, and is washed altogether clean from sin, when they apperceive that regeneration is effected by means indefinite in number and ineffable, are amazed and laugh at their ignorance, which they also call insanity, concerning the instantaneous remission of sins, and concerning justification, which they held in the world. They are occasionally informed, that the Lord remitteth sins to every one who from his heart desires it; nevertheless, they to whom sins are so remitted, are not, on that account, separated from the diabolical crew, to which they are close tied by evils; which evils follow the life which all carry along with them. They learn afterwards from experience, that to be separated from the hells is to be separated from sins, and that this cannot in any wise be effected, except by a thousand and a thousand means known to the Lord alone, and this by continual succession, if you are willing to believe it, to eternity; for man is so great evil, that he cannot be fully delivered even from one sin to eternity, but can only, by the mercy of the Lord, if he hath received it, be withheld from sin and kept in good."

"5115. When man is in the act of being re-born, spiritual life flows in into him, as life by heat from the sun into a tree, when it is in the act of budding. He who is born a man, is, in the Word throughout, compared to the subjects of the vegetable kingdom, especially to trees; and this, because the whole vegetable kingdom, as also the animal kingdom, represents such things as appertain to man, consequently, such as are in the Lord's kingdom; for man is a heaven in the least form. . . . Hence, also, the ancients called man a microcosm: they might have called him, likewise, a little heaven, if they had been better acquainted with the state of heaven. . . . Man who is born anew, that is, who is regenerated by the Lord, is especially called a heaven; for, in this case, he is implanted in good and truth divine, which is from the Lord; consequently, he is implanted in heaven. For the man who is re-born, in like manner as a tree, begins from seed (wherefore by seed, in the Word, is signified the truth which is from good:) also, in like manner as a tree, he produceth leaves, next blossoms, and, finally, fruit; for he produces such things as are of intelligence, which also in the Word are signified by leaves; next, such things as are of wisdom, which are signified by blossoms; and, finally, such things as are of life, viz: the goods of love and charity in act, which in the Word are signified by

fruits. Such is the representative similitude between the fruit-bearing tree, and the man who is regenerated; insomuch that from a tree may be learnt how the case is with regeneration, if so be any thing be previously known concerning spiritual good and truth."

"5116. The cause and ground of the existence of such things in the vegetable kingdom, are from the influx of the spiritual world. But this cannot at all be believed by those who attribute all things to nature, and nothing to the Divine (being or principle;) whereas, to those who attribute all things to the Divine (being or principle) and nothing to nature, it is given to see, not only that every particular thing in nature is from that source, but also that it corresponds, and, in consequence of corresponding, represents; and, finally, it is given them to see, that universal nature is a theatre representative of the Lord's kingdom; thus, that the Divine (being or principle) is in each particular thing thereof; insomuch, that it is also a representation of The Eternal and the Infinite—of The Eternal, from propagation to eternity; of The Infinite, from a multiplication of seeds to infinity. Such tendencies could never have existed in the respective subjects of the vegetable kingdom, unless the Divine (being or principle) continually flowed in; for from influx comes conatus; from conatus, energy; and from energy, effect. They who attribute all things to nature say, that such things were implanted in fruits and seeds in the first creation, and that, in consequence of the energy thence received, they are afterwards moved of themselves to such operation; but they do not consider, that subsistence is perpetual existence, or, what is a similar thing, that propagation is perpetual creation; neither do they consider, that effect is the continuation of cause, and that when the cause ceases, the effect ceases; and hence, that every effect without a continual influx of the cause instantly perishes. Nor yet do they consider, that what is unconnected with the first of all principles, consequently with the Divine (being or principle,) in an instant falls into nothing; for what is prior must be in what is posterior, in order that what is posterior may have being. If they who attribute all things to nature, and to the Divine (being or principle,) so little as scarcely to amount to any thing, considered these things, they might be enabled also to acknowledge, that all and singular the things in nature represent such things as are in the spiritual world; consequently, such as are in the Lord's kingdom, where the Divine (principle) of the Lord is proximately represented. This is the

reason for which it was said, that there is an influx from the spiritual world; but thereby is meant, that the influx is through the spiritual world from the Lord's Divine (principle.) The reason why natural men do not consider such things is, because they are not willing to acknowledge them; for they are in terrestrial and corporeal things, and hence in the life of self-love and the love of the world, consequently, in an inverted order with respect to those things which are of the spiritual world or heaven; and to see such things from an inverted state is impossible; for they see the things which are below as things above, and the things which are above as things below, &c. . . . Who amongst them is there, who, whilst he sees blossoms on a tree and on other plants, considers that it is, as it were, the manifestation of their gladness, in consequence of producing, on that occasion, fruits or seeds? They see that flowers precede, and are continued even till they have the initiaments of fruit or seed into their bosom, and thereby drain off their juice thereinto; if they knew any thing concerning the re-birth or regeneration of man, or rather, if they were willing to know, from similitude they would also see in those flowers a representative of the state of man before regeneration, viz. that man at that time blossoms in like manner from the good of intelligence and wisdom, that is, is in interior gladness and in beauty; because, in such case, he is in the endeavor to implant those things, viz. the goods of intelligence and wisdom, into the life, that is, to produce fruits. That the state is of such a sort, cannot be known by them; because what the interior gladness is, and what the interior beauty which are represented, is not at all known by those who are only in the gladnesses of the love of the world, and in the delights of self-love. Those gladnesses and delights cause the above things to appear gladless and undelightful, insomuch that they hold them in aversion; and when they hold them in aversion, they also reject them as somewhat offensive, or as somewhat of no value; consequently they deny them, and at the same time, in this case, deny that there is any such thing as a spiritual and celestial principle. Hence now comes the insanity of the present age, which is believed to be wisdom."

"10,225. Man, when he attains to the age of twenty years, begins to think from himself; for man, from first infancy to extreme old age, undergoes several states as to his interiors, which are of intelligence and wisdom. The first state is from nativity to the fifth year of his age; this

state is a state of ignorance, and of innocence in ignorance, and is called infancy. The second state is from the fifth year of age even to the twentieth; this state is a state of instruction and of science, and is called boyhood. The third state is from the twentieth year of age to the sixtieth; which state is a state of intelligence, and is called adolescence, youth, and manhood. The fourth or last state is from the sixtieth year of age and upwards; which state is a state of wisdom, and of innocence in wisdom, &c. That the first state is a state of ignorance, and also of innocence in ignorance, is evident. During the continuance of this state, the interiors are forming to use, consequently are not manifested, but only the most external, which are of the sensual man. When these alone are manifested, there is ignorance; for whatsoever man understands and perceives, is from the interiors. Hence also it may be manifest, that the innocence which exists at that time, and is called the innocence of infancy, is innocence the most external. That the second state is a state of instruction and of science, is also evident; this state is not yet a state of intelligence, because the child at that time doth not form any conclusions from himself, neither doth he discern between truths and truths, nor even between truths and falses, from himself, but from others; he only thinks and speaks things of the memory, thus from science alone; nor doth he see and perceive whether a thing be so, except on the authority of his master, consequently, because another hath so said. But the third state is called a state of intelligence, since at this time man thinks from himself, and discerns, and concludes; and what he then concludes, is his own, and not another's: at this time faith commences; for faith is not the faith of the man himself, until, from the ideas of his own proper thought, he hath confirmed what he believes; previous to this time, faith is not his, but another's in himself; for he believed the person, not the thing. Hence it may be manifest, that a state of intelligence then commences with man, when he no longer thinks from a master, but from himself; which effect hath not place until the interiors are open towards heaven. It is to be noted, that the exteriors appertaining to man are in the world, and the interiors in heaven; and that in proportion to the quantity of light which flows in from heaven into those things which are from the world, in the same proportion man is intelligent and wise; this is effected in the degree, and according to the quality, in which the interiors are opened; and they

are so far opened as man lives for heaven, and not for the world. But the last state is a state of wisdom and of innocence in wisdom, which is, when man has no longer any concern about understanding truths and goods, but about willing them and living them, for this it is to be wise; and man is enabled to will truths and goods, and to live them, so far as he is in innocence, that is, so far as he believes that he hath nothing of wisdom from himself, but that whatever relish he hath of wisdom is from the Lord; also, so far as he loves it to be so; hence it is, that this state, also, is a state of innocence in wisdom. From the succession of these states, the man who is wise may also see the wonderful things of Divine Providence, which are these; that a prior state is the plane of those which continually follow; and that the opening or unfolding of the interiors proceeds from outermost things, even to inmost things successively; and at length in such a sort, that what was first but in things outermost, this also is last but in things inmost, viz. ignorance and innocence; for he who knows that of himself he is ignorant of all things, and that whatsoever he knows is from the Lord, he is in the ignorance pertaining to wisdom, and also in the innocence pertaining to wisdom."

"4136. Man knoweth not how goods are varied with him, still less how the state of every good is changed; not even how the good of infancy is varied and changed into the good of childhood, and this into the succeeding good which is that of youth; afterwards into the good of adult age, and lastly into the good of old age. With those who are not regenerated, they are not goods which are changed, but affections and their delights; whereas with those who are regenerated, there are changes of the state of goods, and this from infancy even to the last period of their life; for it is foreseen of the Lord what kind of life man is about to lead, and how he will suffer himself to be led of the Lord; and inasmuch as all and singular things, yea, most singular, are foreseen, they are also provided for; but how the case is on such occasion with changes of the state of good, man knoweth nothing, and this, principally, by reason that he hath no knowledges of such a thing,*

* In the original, two different words are used, *scientia* and *cognitio*. I have used the common translation, which does not give the difference between the two. It might be rendered thus: *With regard to the changes of the state of good on such occasion, man is in possession of no science or information, by reason that his thoughts are not cognizant of the fact itself, nor has he any desire that they should be.*

nor, at this day, desires to have; and whereas the Lord doth not flow in immediately with man and teach, but flows in into his thoughts, thus mediately, therefore he cannot in any wise know the changes of the states of those goods: and inasmuch as man is such, viz. is without knowledges of this subject, and moreover there are few at this day who suffer themselves to be regenerated, therefore if these things were explained more fully, they could not be comprehended."

4096. With regard to the reciprocal application of the affections of truth to good, "these things are such that they do not fall into any but an instructed understanding, and one which perceives a delight in the science of such things, consequently, which hath for an end spiritual knowledges. Others have no concern about such things, and are not able to stretch the mind to the consideration of them; for they who have worldly and terrestrial things for an end, cannot withdraw the senses thence; and if they did withdraw them, they would perceive what is undelightful; for, in such case, they would depart and remove themselves from those things which they have for an end, that is, which they love. Let every one, who is of such a quality, make the experiment with himself, whether he be willing to know how good adjoineth itself to the affections of truth, and how the affections of truth apply themselves; whether or not it is not irksome to him to know this; and whether he will not say, that such considerations are of no profit to him, and also that he apprehends nothing about them. But if such things are told him as relate to his business in the world, howsoever deep and hidden they may be, and what is the quality of such and such a person as to his affections, also how by those affections he may adjoin him to himself, by applying himself to his intentions and expressions: this he not only apprehends, but has also a perception of the interior things thereof. In like manner, he who studies from affection to investigate the abstruse principles of the sciences, loves to look into, and also does look into, subjects of a more intricate nature than what are here treated of; but when spiritual good and truth are treated of, he feels it irksome, and also holds it in aversion. These observations are made, in order to shew what is the quality of the men of the church at this day."*

* These quotations are taken from the English translation, which I have copied just as it is, with the exception of a few verbal alterations.

Here, my Lord, I bring to a close my extracts from the Arcana Cœlestia, and, with these, my observations on the Internal Sense of the Word of God, as unfolded by Swedenborg. That these observations will be satisfactory, nay, that they will occasion any serious reflection in the minds of some of my readers, is more than I have reason to anticipate. I know too well the force of prejudice, the determination of our opponents, in general, that we shall be wrong at any rate. Do we teach the plainer precepts of the Gospel? What folly to inculcate, as part of a new revelation, what every one knew before! Do we unfold the more inward and spiritual truths of the Gospel? We are teaching what is unintelligible and speculative; whereas, the Word of God is plain and practical! Do we shew the reasonableness of our views of Christian doctrine? It is presumption to introduce reason into divine mysteries, or to attempt to explain them without an express revelation! Do we plead the fact of a revelation? The very supposition of such a thing implies the greatest folly and fanaticism! Do we inculcate doctrines which are old? How absurd to teach it as part of what presumes to be new! Do we teach what is new? for that very reason it must be false! Do we, like the householder, bring out of our treasure things old and new? We are, on this account, doubly deluded; for what is new cannot be true, and what is old cannot be new! Verily, may we say, "Whereunto shall we liken the men of this generation, and to what are they like? They are like children sitting in the market-place, and calling one to another, and saying, We have piped unto you and ye have not danced; we have mourned to you, and ye have not wept.—But wisdom is justified of all her children!" (Luke vii, 31.)

I now come to consider the subject of INTERCOURSE WITH THE SPIRITUAL WORLD; and in so doing, my object will be to shew the peculiarly practical nature of the information communicated by Swedenborg under this particular.

On this, however, as on the former occasion, it will be desirable to make a few antecedent observations; for, as the Essays have urged certain *a priori* arguments against further knowledge upon this subject, it will be well first to meet these objections, and to ascertain whether or not there be any *a priori* argument in its favor; as also to clear away some of the clouds in which the subject has been enveloped. The first objection is, that this kind of knowledge is calculated only to gratify curiosity. The second, that it is

forbidden, and that aiming to acquire it is presumption. The third, that, were it useful, God would long since have revealed it. The fourth, that it leaves no room for the exercise of faith; and the fifth, that no other revelation is to be expected, beside the one we already possess.

The first objection is, that the knowledge thus communicated is calculated only to gratify curiosity.

This objection applies not merely to the visions of Swedenborg, but to any further information whatever respecting another world, beyond that which is generally supposed to be possessed; and, undoubtedly, if, in the case of any individual, information of this kind serves only to gratify his curiosity, and to indulge in him a prying and inquisitive spirit, he is better without such a knowledge than with it. We read in the Acts, that "all the Athenians and strangers at Athens spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or to hear some new thing;" and hence, when St. Paul was at Athens, they were curious to know what new thing it was which he had to tell them. "And some said, What will this babbler say? others, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods. May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is? for thou bringest certain strange things to our ears; we would therefore know what these things mean." The philosophers, it appears, were curious to know what new thing St. Paul had to tell them; but if their motive was mere curiosity, whose fault was this?—the fault of St. Paul, or of the philosophers? Upon the principles urged against the writings of Swedenborg, any one might have adduced a *prima facie* evidence against the truth of what the apostle had to preach, by stating, "You are going to gratify our curiosity, but Divine Wisdom does not gratify our curiosity; so that what you are going to say cannot be Divine Wisdom." Surely, a person may listen to what is true and practical, as well as to what is false and visionary, out of motives of mere curiosity; yet his motives, whatever they may be, are no argument against the truth of what he may hear; if they were, we may as well argue against the visions recorded in Scripture, and, indeed, against every part of the Bible, because a person may examine them from wrong motives. The Essays, however, observe, (page 242,) that Scripture sometimes excites curiosity, but does not gratify it. Now, I humbly conceive that, in the mind of a good man, it excites no curiosity; and for this reason, that he has no mere curiosity to be excited. For by curi-

osity, I understand the Essays to mean, a desire of knowledge merely for its own sake,—*a prying and inquisitive spirit.* But a truly good man has no such spirit, either to be gratified or excited; and therefore I cannot say of him, that Scripture is calculated to excite his curiosity. A desire of Divine knowledge is not mere curiosity. It may appear so to those who have no other motive to urge them to the attainment of this knowledge; and if *they* made the attempt, possibly curiosity alone might induce them to do so; but would they be justified in attributing to others the wrong motives by which they themselves were actuated? Many are too apt to judge of others by themselves; and a man's self-love will easily induce him to think that others cannot be actuated by higher motives than himself.

But the Essays observe, not only that what Swedenborg has stated with regard to the other world is "food for curiosity," but that "his followers insist much on the importance of believing this pretended revelation."—If by "pretended revelation," be here meant Swedenborg's narratives with regard to the other world, I can only say that, the revelation which we believe it most important for mankind to receive, is that of the internal sense of the Holy Word; and the reason why we do so is, because, as we have seen, it treats of the regeneration of the human heart. Comparatively with this revelation, we consider that which relates to Heaven and Hell to be of secondary importance. I am persuaded that a very ordinary attention to the subject will convince any impartial reader, that, so far from the receivers of Swedenborg's principles insisting on a belief in his revelations with regard to the other world, as the point of main importance, they, on the contrary, may be found complaining of these assertions on the part of their opponents as unfair; as one of the many instances of misrepresentation of their views; and as a ready, though not a safe, refuge from the force of their arguments.

Again, the reader of the Essays, judging solely from what is there stated with regard to Swedenborg and those who receive his principles, would be led to conclude, that Swedenborg's alleged revelations, with regard to the other world, were highly gratifying to curiosity; and, as such, were insisted upon by his followers, with a view to allure converts.

Allow me, however, to say, that if Swedenborg ever wrote, or if his followers ever circulated, these narratives, merely with a view to allure converts, they must have con-

tradicted their own principles; for it is a maxim with Swedenborg, that a man is not reformed by seeing visions, nor merely by believing in them; and that faith founded upon mere external evidence, is not genuine.* A man who receives the doctrines of Swedenborg, merely because he believes in the reality of Swedenborg's intercourse with the other world, is not a genuine receiver of them: the very idea of considering him such we should esteem absurd. Besides, it is a mistake to suppose, that either Swedenborg, or the receivers of his writings, consider his narratives calculated to allure converts. Generally speaking, the reverse is the fact. Indeed, we learn from the biography of Swedenborg, that when he published these narratives, he was perfectly aware of their being calculated rather to repel than allure; and there is reason to believe, that some of them, at least, were designed to operate upon the minds of many, in this manner. A contemporary of Swedenborg, Count Hopken, (who for many years was Prime Minister to the King of Sweden, and personally acquainted with Swedenborg,) in one of his letters to General Tuxen, observes:—(New Jerusalem Magazine, page 269)—"Swedenborg might, with or without reason (which I do not indeed venture to determine,) be accused of having given a heated imagination too free play in his revelations; but, for my own part, I have nothing on which I could found this criticism. Whether or not our Lord, in our times, grants to particular persons particular revelations, what is the nature of such revelations, and *what the criterion for distinguishing the genuine from the false*,—of all this I have no solid grounds for judging. And if, according to human notions, we were to compare the revelations in the Apocalypse with those of Swedenborg, I know not to which of the two classes the preference would be given. . . . I once represented to this venerable man, in rather a serious manner, that he would do best not to mix his beautiful writings with so many revelations, of which ignorance makes a jest and derision. But he answered me, that *this did not depend on him; that he was too old to sport with spir-*

* In order that the reader may understand the design of this argument, it should be remembered, that alleged visions in the early ages of the church, as some writers inform us, were the ground on which certain doctrines or ecclesiastical regulations were enforced; so that if any one doubted the truth of the one or the propriety of the other, it was declared to be placed beyond all dispute, by some pretended vision. However questionable either might be, the vision settled the matter.

itual things, and too much concerned for his eternal happiness, to give into such foolish notions; assuring me, on his hopes of salvation, that no imagination produced in him his revelations, which were true, and from what he had heard and seen." The writer then proceeds to deplore the *obstacles* which would be presented by the Memorable Relations, and states the difficulties he had felt in his own mind upon the subject; while he acknowledges the delight he experienced in the perusal of other parts of Swedenborg's works. In another letter, (No. 5,) to the same person, the same writer observes, speaking of a foreign clergyman, "He was by no means a Swedenborgian, for he did not understand his revelations; and I could wish the happy deceased, (Swedenborg) had left them out; since they may prevent infidelity from approaching towards his doctrines, and they make enthusiasts and visionaries of the credulous. I represented to him these inconveniences; but (he replied) he was commanded to declare what he had seen in the other world; and he related it as proofs, that he did not reveal his own thoughts, but that they came from above." By this I understand, that Swedenborg was aware of the obstacle which would be presented by his narratives, to the progress of his principles; that, as such, in all human judgment, it might be better to withhold them; and that the fact of his not doing so, might be considered as some indication that he was acting in obedience to a higher command.

Though himself convinced that his Relations were not calculated to suit the popular taste, and, as such, to allure converts, he was nevertheless aware, that some would consider him as publishing them for this purpose. (Arcana Cœlestia, n. 68.) "I am well aware," says he, "of the objections which will here be urged by a variety of persons. Some will insist that it is a thing impossible for any one to converse with spirits and angels, during his life in the body; others, that such intercourse must be mere fancy and illusion; others, that I have invented such relations in order to gain credit; whilst others will indulge doubts and scruples of different sorts. All these objections, however, are of no weight with me. For I have seen, have heard, and have had sensible experience of what I am about to declare."—In another place, (Arcana Cœlestia, n. 1880,) alluding to the circumstance of his communicating to others what he had seen and heard, he observes, "This, however, I was forbidden to do, and for this among

other reasons; that they would have said, I was out of my senses; or would have thought that what I told them was the invention of a delirious imagination."—We may indeed observe, that various objections, which he anticipated would be brought against the Memorable Relations, are stated in various parts of his writings, with greater force and clearness than by those who entertain them; nor am I aware of the author any where manifesting any particular desire to answer them, except by opening the mind of the reader upon spiritual things, and then leaving him to judge of the truth of the narratives, from their own internal evidence.

Not only, however, are many of the objections to the Memorable Relations anticipated in Swedenborg's writings; but the Relations themselves appear sometimes designedly interposed as an obstacle to prevent all, as far as possible, from entering into a knowledge of these writings, who are not prepared to receive them into their life. Thus, perhaps, one of the most objectionable Relations in the works, occurs immediately after the following words:—"Unless a man be principled in Divine Truths, or if he be only in a few truths and in falses at the same time, he may falsify truths by falses, as is done by every heretic with regard to the literal sense of the Word. To prevent, therefore, any person from entering into the spiritual sense, and perverting genuine truth which belongeth to that sense, there are guards set by the Lord, which are signified in the Word by cherubs." With respect, then, to the readers of Swedenborg's writings, so far from circulating his narratives with a view to procure converts, they would expect no more success from giving them circulation, than any ordinary Christian would in making converts, from circulating an explanation of the visions recorded in Scripture: they are, in fine, generally speaking, the last things from the circulation of which they would expect success. Besides, narratives of the marvellous are usually addressed to the ignorant, to those who have neither moral nor intellectual power sufficient to put their truth to the test. Swedenborg, however, wrote for men of information; for the educated, as well as for the ignorant. He did not make his pretensions before a superstitious multitude; but openly, in the face of one of the courts of Europe,* and of all the scien-

* Kant, the celebrated German philosopher, was a contemporary of Swedenborg; and, hearing of his reputed supernatural communications, considered the evidence upon which he heard them, sufficient to justify him in writing to

tific and philosophical persons, to whose acquaintance his previous works had introduced him. An ignorant mind

Swedenborg upon the subject. Swedenborg, it appears, never answered the letter; neither did he answer a letter upon a similar subject, addressed to him by Lavater. Swedenborg's silence, however, did not deter Kant from making further inquiries, the result of which appears to be his conviction of the reality of Swedenborg's supernatural intercourse. I mention this, in order to introduce the following remarks upon the subject, by the Editors of the Intellectual Repository, as published in vol. i, page 57, for the year 1830-31:—

"Swedenborg's omitting to answer, by letter, Professor Kant's inquiries of him, relating to the above affair, may appear extraordinary. But it is to be observed, that he never, himself, laid any stress upon these miraculous proofs of the truth of his pretensions. If asked respecting them by those who had heard them from others, he would say that the reports were true; but he abstained from writing any accounts of them; and never does he appeal to them, or so much as mention them, in his works. How strong an evidence is this of his elevation of mind; and of his perfect conviction of the truth of the views he was made the instrument of unfolding, with his own divine appointment to that purpose, as standing in need of no such evidence for their support! Could it be possible for any of the merely fanatical pretenders to divine communications to appeal to such testimonies of supernatural endowment, how continually would they do so! how eagerly would they seek to silence objectors, by referring to the queens, counts, ambassadors, governors, and university professors, that had been witnesses of their power! But it is precisely on account of the silencing nature of such evidence, that Swedenborg declines to make use of it. It is a principle in his theology, that nothing which externally compels assent can impart an internal reception of genuine truth, which is the only kind of reception that can do the subject of it any real good: it is to the praise, then, of his consistency, that he never adverts to the external demonstrations, which, under peculiar circumstances, he had occasionally been induced to give, of the reality of his communications with the spiritual world. Yet, this once established, the reality of his divine commission is established also. To be able to have intercourse at pleasure with the inhabitants of the eternal world, and with any who have hence departed thither, is obviously an endowment unattainable by any natural means. It can, then, only be enjoyed by the special gift of the Lord. But the Lord, we may be certain, would not remove the barrier, which, for various important reasons, is established between the other world and this, for any merely trivial and natural purpose. He can only, then, have done it in the case of Swedenborg, because, without it, he could not have been qualified to explain the correspondence between spiritual things and natural, which was necessary to the development of the spiritual sense of the Word; nor to restore the lost knowledge respecting the nature of the life after death, of heaven and hell: both which discoveries were indispensable to the opening of the New Jerusalem dispensation. When, therefore, Swedenborg gave proof that he enjoyed the power of free communication with the spiritual world, he gave proof, at the same time, that he had truly received, as he had affirmed, a divine commission to promulgate the truths of this dispensation. Yet he nobly forbore to appeal to this overwhelming testimony; because he knew that they whose minds were so closed as to be incapable of believing the truth through its own inherent light, could not be made to believe it interiorly, and thus permanently, by merely external demonstrations. Doubtless, however, it was of Divine Providence that occasions arose, which constrained him to give such demonstrations, and that they were recorded by others; because such things serve for confirmation of the truth, though they are not the proper grounds of its original reception. When presented also upon testimony, and at a distance of time, they lose that compulsive character which they possess when they take place immediately, or nearly so, before our eyes: and thus they may then become useful to draw attention to the truth, which, when known, may convince by its own evidence."

could not possibly understand the principles upon which his Memorable Relations are written. But, it may be said, even the well educated may be credulous. Credulous of what? Of the Memorable Relations of Swedenborg? Experience, in general, has proved the contrary. It is only after a painful struggle of mind, after a conviction that it is impossible to resist the force of the internal evidence, that the readers of Swedenborg's writings are, in general, led to receive his Relations; so that, instead of these Relations operating at first as an evidence in support of his views, these Relations generally require the strongest evidence in support of them. Besides, credulity and the gratification of curiosity go, to a certain extent, hand in hand. For if a man were curious to know the mysteries of the other world, and a narrative were placed before him, pretending to afford all the information he wanted, but which, nevertheless, he previously believed to be the creation of a distempered fancy, it can scarcely be said that, in reading it, his curiosity would be gratified. There is, indeed, a curiosity which might be gratified on such an occasion; but I now speak of that which arises out of a desire of positive *knowledge*, and repeat that, if a man were curious to *know* the mysteries of the other world, no narrative would satisfy that curiosity, which he did not believe to contain some degree of truth. So far as he believed it to be a fiction, so far he would be indifferent to its perusal; and, unless he had other motives to excite him, would consider it only lost time to peruse it. In proportion, then, as the narratives of Swedenborg are ill adapted to gratify the credulity of readers in general, they seem equally ill adapted to gratify their curiosity.*

* It may be useful, perhaps, here to refer the reader to what some authors have written on the subject of, what they call, a *laudable* curiosity, a subject which appears to be omitted in the Essays, in the discussion of this question. In his first Bampton Lecture, Bishop Heber observes, "So far is the assertion incorrect, that a contemplation of the mysteries of Christianity is unfavorable to the Christian character, that, if it be more philosophical and more efficacious to furnish motives than rules for conduct; if it be possible to purify the passions by employing them on the worthiest objects, and, by contemplation of the Divine perfections, to raise the soul, in some sort, to the Deity; no surer way can be found to improve and strengthen the spiritual part of our nature, than the gratification of that natural and *laudable curiosity* after things unseen, by which the soul of man, as if conscious of her future destiny, delights to expatiate, so far as advance is possible, in those boundless fields of inquiry which are connected with the ways and attributes of the Almighty, the secrets of his government, and his intercourse with our intellectual being.

"Such inquiries, conducted with becoming modesty, may be expected at once to elevate and to humble the soul; to elevate her powers by exercising them on the noblest objects; to humble her self-estimation by the sense of those

Far be it from me to affirm, that there have not been some, who have been credulous of the Memorable Relations of Swedenborg, or that others have not been rationally convinced of their truth solely by their perusal; I only say, that, in general, these persons form the exception, not the rule. We know that, in the early ages of Christianity, there was no lack of credulity, both in regard to the working of miracles, and to intercourse with another world. History supplies us with lamentable instances of the fact. The enthusiasm, folly, and fanaticism, to which alleged supernatural privileges gave rise in those days, have no parallel in the history of the progress of Swedenborg's writings; but, because of the credulity and visionary fancies which then prevailed, would a person be justified in arguing against the reality of the visions seen by the apostles? Because some, or even most, alleged visions were untrue, were all therefore false? Because some believers were credulous, were there none sober-minded? or did no supernatural privileges therefore exist? What has the credulity, or the incredulity, of the individual, to do with the real fact? Surely the evidence of a fact is not affected by the belief or unbelief of those to whom the evidence is communicated. Where, indeed, the evidence rests upon the testimony of individuals, their credulity or incredulity becomes an important question; but where the facts are proposed to us solely on the authority of their own internal evidence, it is to this authority alone that the appeal can justly be made. "Besides the objections," says Bishop Butler, "against the evidence for Christianity, many are alleged against the scheme of it; against the whole manner in which it is put and left with the world; as well as against several particular relations in Scripture; objections drawn from the deficiencies of revelation; from things in it appearing to men foolishness; *from its containing matters of offence, which have led, and must have been foreseen would lead, into strange enthusiasm and superstition,*" &c.—Yet, from all this, what

narrow limits which must confine her hardiest flight, by the comparison eternally presented to her notice, between finite and infinite wisdom.

"Spiritual pride, indeed, and metaphysical pedantry, can only arise from, and are certain symptoms of, speculations not carried sufficiently far, inquiry too soon contented. They who skim the surface may think that all is known to them; but he who strives to sound the depths of ocean may receive, it is true, a rich repayment of his time and labor, but must desist at last with a feeling very different from pride. Our finite successes shrink into nothing when brought in contact with immensity; and we cannot rejoice that we have penetrated so far, without recognizing the weakness which has prevented our proceeding farther."

does the learned prelate justly conclude?—"After all," says he, "that which is true must be admitted; though it should show us the shortness of our faculties, and that we are in no wise judges of many things, of which we are apt to think ourselves very competent ones. Nor will this be any objection with reasonable men," &c. (chap. iii, part 2.)

That Swedenborg's visions may to some appear to be attractive, is not denied. It seems, however, that, whether attractive or repulsive, they are alike objectionable: objectionable, because they are attractive; objectionable, because they are repulsive. If they are repulsive, "He hath a devil and is mad; why hear ye him?" If they are attractive, "they gratify curiosity and a love of the marvellous, being written only with a view to allure converts." Now there is one thing with regard to the attractive narratives of Swedenborg, which is rather remarkable. In most of the cases, if not in all, in which they might seem to captivate the imagination, a special guard against this evil is introduced, and the reader warned that, if, in perusing them, he gives reins to the imagination, he is deceiving himself, and wholly misunderstanding the subject. What is more natural than for the enthusiast to imagine, that heaven, as a paradise, must be full of the most gorgeous paradisiacal scenery?—and how would his fancy naturally depict to itself its varied pastures, its flowing rivers, and the glories of its celestial inhabitants? Here, then, is the very case in point. On this subject, Your Grace has justly said, the enthusiast would be sure—"*to dream largely.*" Now what is the fact? One of the longest Memorable Relations in Swedenborg's writings is introduced for the purpose of exposing the folly of those ideas of heaven which it is asserted that he entertains; and on the faith of which, he is denominated an enthusiast. In introducing quotations from his works upon this subject, I trust it will be distinctly understood, that I am not calling upon the reader to believe in them as containing genuine facts. He is at liberty to receive or to reject them, just as he pleases. My present object in introducing them, is, not to prove the Memorable Relations to be true, but what is urged against them to be untrue; and I leave every impartial mind to conclude, how far the successive refutation of objections against a narrative, may be any indirect evidence in its favor; particularly, where those objections are founded upon principles, which are said to be the sure marks of one that is false.

In the Memorable Relation, then, to which we have referred, an angel is represented as saying, (Conj. Love, page 77, vol. i,) "Thou knowest, that every man who had desired heaven, and had formed conceptions in his mind about its happiness, is introduced, after death, into that particular happiness which he had framed in his imagination; and when he experiences what such happiness is, that it is only according to the vain imaginary delusions of his own fancy, he is then led out of error and instructed in the truth." And what is the truth in which he is instructed? The truth is this,—(Conj. Love, vol. i, page 92,)—"Heavenly joy and eternal happiness consist not in external paradisiacal delights, unless they are attended also with such as are internal. External paradisiacal delights reach only the senses of the body; but such as are internal reach the affections of the soul; and if the former be without the latter, they are void of all heavenly life, inasmuch as they have no soul or spirit in them; and every delight, without its corresponding soul or spirit, continually grows more languid and faint, fatiguing the mind more than labor. There are in every part of heaven paradisiacal gardens, in which the angels find much joy; and so far as it is attended with a delight of the soul, so far the joy is real and true. Hereupon they all asked, 'What is the delight of the soul, and whence is it derived?' The angel replied, 'The delight of the soul is the delight of love and wisdom proceeding from the Lord; and whereas love is an operative principle, and is operative by wisdom, therefore they are both fixed together in the effect of such operation, which effect is use. The delight arising from such use entereth into the soul by influx from the Lord, and descendeth through the superior and inferior parts of the mind into all the senses of the body, and in them is complete and full, becoming hereby a true joy, and partaking of an eternal nature from the eternal fountain whence it proceedeth.' "—Again, in the Arcana Cœlestia, 5428, it is said, "They who think of the glory of heaven from natural light not yet illuminated by celestial light. . . . cannot form any other idea concerning it, than as concerning the glory of the world; inasmuch as, while they read the prophetic revelations, particularly of John in the Apocalypse, all things in heaven are described as being most magnificent; but when they are told that the glory of heaven exceeds all the magnificence of the world, insomuch that this latter can scarce be compared with it, and that *yet this is not the glory of heaven, but*

that the glory of heaven is the divine principle which beams forth from each single thing which appears there, and is the perception of things divine and consequent wisdom; that this glory, however, is only for those in heaven who make no account of that magnificence in comparison with wisdom, and attribute all wisdom to the Lord, and none at all to themselves, this glory of heaven, when it is viewed by natural light. . . . is in no wise acknowledged." Again, "All things there, to every single object, appear in their most beautiful spring and bloom, with an astonishing magnificence and variety, and they are living by virtue of their being representative; *for there is nothing but what represents and signifies something celestial and spiritual.* Thus the objects presented to view affect not only the sight with pleasantness, but the mind with happiness. But (with regard to the beauty of mere external appearances) the *angels behold such things with other eyes, not being delighted with the paradises, but with the representatives, and thus, with the celestial and spiritual things which give them birth,*" 1622.—Again: "These things (the beauty of the external objects) *are respectively of small account;* they who are principled in the intelligence itself, and the wisdom, in which those things originate, are in such a state of happiness, that *the things which have been mentioned are esteemed by them of but little importance,*" 4529.—Again, after a description of some of the appearances in heaven, an angel is represented as saying, (Ibid. page 106,) "*Ye may possibly conceive that such things bewitch our eyes, and infatuate us by their grandeur, and that we consider them as constituting the joys of our heaven; but this is not the case, inasmuch as, our hearts not being in such things, they are only accessory to the joys of our hearts;* and therefore, so far as we contemplate them as accessory, and as the workmanship of God, so far we contemplate in them the divine omnipotence and benignity."—Again, in another part it is said, (Ibid. page 108,) "At the sight of all these things, the companions of the angels exclaimed, 'Behold heaven in form! Wheresoever we turn our eyes, we are struck with an influx of somewhat celestially paradisiacal, which is not to be expressed.' At this the angel rejoiced, and said, 'All the gardens of our heaven are representative forms or types of heavenly blessednesses in their origins; and because the influx of these blessednesses elevated your minds, therefore ye exclaimed, Behold heaven in form! But they who do not receive that influx, regard these paradisiacal gardens only as common woods or for-

ests. All they receive the influx, who are under the influence of the love of uses; but they do not receive it, who are under the influence of the love of glory, not originating in uses.' Afterwards he explained and taught them *what every particular thing in the garden represented and signified.*"—To these quotations only one more shall be added, (Ibid. page 102.) "When they of the first assembly had heard these relations, they all likewise acknowledged that they had never entertained any other notion of heaven, than of a local blessedness independent of their internal dispositions; and that to be admitted therein, would be to enter upon the fruition of never ceasing delights. Then the angel addressed them in the following words: 'Ye see now that *the joys of heaven and eternal happiness have not relation to place, but to the state of the life of man; and a state of heavenly life is derived from love and wisdom.* And whereas use, or profitable service, is that which containeth love and wisdom, and in which they are fixed and subsist, therefore a state of heavenly life is derived from the conjunction of love and wisdom in use. It is the same thing if we call them charity, faith, and good works; inasmuch as charity is love; faith is truth, whence wisdom springeth; and good works are uses. Moreover, in our spiritual world there are places as in the natural world; otherwise, there could be no habitations and distinct abodes. Nevertheless, place with us is not place, but an appearance of place according to the state of love and wisdom, or of charity and faith. Every one who becometh an angel, carrieth his own heaven within himself; inasmuch as he carrieth in himself the love of his own heaven; for man, from creation, is a very small effigy, image, and type, of the great heaven, and the human form nothing else. Wherefore every one cometh after death to that society in heaven, to whose general form he beareth a particular agreement in his particular form. Consequently, when he entereth into that society, he entereth into a form corresponding to himself; thus he passeth from himself into a self-society, as it were, and from a self-society, into himself; and enjoyeth his own life in that of the society, and that of the society in his own life. For every society in heaven may be considered as one common body, and the constituent angels as the similar parts thereof, from which the common body deriveth its existence and support. Hence it follows, that they who are principled in evils, and in falses originating in evils, have formed in themselves an effigy of hell, which suffer-

eth torment in heaven, from the influx and violent activity of one opposite upon another. For infernal love is opposite to heavenly love; and, consequently, the delights of each are in a state of discord and enmity, and whensoever they meet, endeavor to destroy each other."

Now, when it is considered, that these are not mere isolated assertions, but that they contain the principle upon which all Swedenborg's alleged visions of heaven and hell are written; that some of these visions are devoted expressly to the purpose of exposing the folly of those ideas of heaven which are attributed to Swedenborg; that, in numerous places, he has demonstrated how, to those who are not prepared for its beatitudes by inward purity, heaven, so far from being a place of happiness, is a place of insufferable agony,—there is no difficulty in concluding, that the objections urged in the Essays are entirely inapplicable to Swedenborg's writings; because a perusal of his works clearly shews, that there is not only no ground for these objections, but not even the slightest shadow of such ground; and, consequently, that if there be any imagination exercised upon the subject, it must be the imagination of those who attribute to Swedenborg the creations of their own mind. Indeed, a review of the arguments against his narratives will shew, that one of the objections against them, has been the absence of that very characteristic which Your Grace has justly attributed to the writings of the enthusiast. The dry matter-of-factness (as it has been called) of his Memorable Relations, has been complained of, as throwing a damp and chill upon the imaginative powers, and investing with too lowly a garb ideas which the poet would have arrayed in all the splendor of rhetorical costume; while the extreme simplicity of the style, in general, is apt to make the ordinary reader forget the grandeur and immensity of the idea which the writer is unfolding. A more inapplicable objection, therefore, could scarcely be urged, than the one which attributes the glowing descriptions of the enthusiast to the narratives of Swedenborg. I entirely agree with Your Grace, that in the case of pretended intercourse with the other world, the impostor and enthusiast would have addressed themselves to the curiosity, credulity, and natural imaginations of their followers; and it is precisely because Swedenborg has not done this, that I would take up the argument in the Essays, and use it as demonstrative evidence that, in this respect, at least,

Swedenborg was not an enthusiast, nor the dupe of a distempered fancy.

But the Essays refer us to the case of St. Paul. They speak of the celestial vision with which he had been favored, and observe, that he alludes, with the utmost possible brevity, to his being caught up into paradise and hearing unspeakable words, without relating any particulars of the vision: this circumstance the reader is naturally led to contrast with Swedenborg's "*copious and distinct revelations*," his "visit to the celestial abodes," &c., of all which it is said "he gives *minute descriptions*:" it is directly contrasted, likewise, with the narratives of Mahomed; and the Essays observe,—"It is truly edifying to compare this with Mahomed's long and circumstantial description of his pretended visit to heaven, filled with a multitude of needless particulars, calculated to gratify an appetite for the marvellous;" the narratives of Swedenborg being thus obviously classed with those of Mahomed. Now, with regard to the minute descriptions of the celestial abodes, pretended to be given by Swedenborg, pardon the liberty I take in observing, that I am not aware that any such are to be found in any part of his works. Swedenborg tells us that there are three heavens, the celestial, the spiritual, and the natural; and that of these, the third heaven or the highest is the celestial, being the same with that into which St. Paul declares he was caught up. The celestial abodes are the abodes in the celestial heavens; and into these Swedenborg observes that he was rarely permitted to enter; whence, so far from giving long and minute descriptions upon this subject, he is silent with regard to most of what he there saw and heard; declaring, like St. Paul, that it would be incomprehensible or incredible; consequently, on the point upon which the Essays have contrasted the writings of St. Paul with those of Swedenborg, there is much more of remarkable coincidence than of contrast. With regard to the abodes in the spiritual heavens, little is stated, compared with what Your Grace justly observes an enthusiast or impostor would probably have done; and what is stated, is stated in a way, which, as I have already shewn, and shall in the sequel have further to shew, renders it impossible for it to have come either from an enthusiast or impostor.

But the Essays remark,—"He (the Christian) may ask them, (infidels,) how it came to pass that no one of our sacred writers has given a full, minute and engaging account of all that is, according to him, to take place at the end of

the world; of all the interesting particulars of the day of judgment; of the new bodies with which men will arise, and of the glories that shall be revealed in heaven; or has given any account at all, or, at least, any from which a decisive conclusion can be drawn, of the condition in which men are to remain during the interval between death and the resurrection."—Now I should be exceedingly sorry to detract from any legitimate argument against either Mahomedanism or infidelity; yet I cannot think the cause of Christianity is advanced, by resting it upon principles which are untenable; for might not the Christian thus be replied to by some other fellow Christian himself? 'How can you start this objection, when you admit that there are many portions of Scripture which you do not understand; and if you do not understand them, how do you know but that they may possibly contain information upon some of those very subjects which you have here specified; as, for instance, the end of the world, and the day of judgment?—subjects which, at least, as some of our commentators admit, appear to be alluded to in the book of Revelation.'

Besides, there is another point of view in which the objection should be considered, before it can be fairly urged. We believe it to be demonstrable from Scripture, that by the end of the world, is meant only the end of the existing dispensation or church; and by the day of judgment, the destruction of that church, and the establishment of another; that hence, the popular ideas respecting the end of the world, and the day of judgment, have not that foundation in Scripture which is commonly supposed; and if so, it is not likely that a sacred writer, under the influence of inspiration, should detail the particulars of that which, *as popularly conceived*, was never designed to exist.

But the Essays observe, "It is plain that nothing could have been more gratifying to the curiosity of all who had an interest in the subject, nothing more likely even to allure fresh converts, than a glowing description of the joys of heaven; it would have been easily believed, too, by those who gave credit to the writer, as it is plain Paul supposed the Corinthians did; it would have been very easy, again, for an impostor to give loose to his fancy, in inventing such a description; and *to an enthusiast it would have been unavoidable; he who was passing off his day-dreams for revelations on himself as well as on others, would have been sure to dream largely on such a subject.* Why then did not Paul do any thing of the kind? I answer, because he was not an

impostor, nor an enthusiast, but taught only what had been actually revealed to him, and what he was commissioned to reveal to others."

It is asked, why St. Paul did not do any thing of the kind? May I answer this question by asking, "Why is it that St. John did?" But it will be said, St. John did not give a full, minute, and engaging account. St. John wrote in types or symbols, and a type will contain as much in a short compass, as, if explained, volumes could comprise. Had Swedenborg given the symbols only, without their explanation, he might, in most instances, have been as concise as the prophets. To draw the comparison fairly between the two, the interpretations of the symbols in Scripture ought to be included; and if this be done, the argument, I presume, will be seen to be invalid. But the narratives of the prophets, it is said, are not minute. Now I reply, that some, at least, appear to be quite as minute as those of Swedenborg; and this for a good reason. If the objects presented to the spiritual vision be symbolical, then, for the purposes of interpretation, a minute description of these objects is as necessary, as, for the same purposes, a minute transcript of a hieroglyphical sentence; for if one hieroglyph were omitted, the meaning of the whole might be altered or left imperfect. This we may see more particularly exemplified in St. John's description of the New Jerusalem.

The symbolical nature of visions of the third heaven, and the difficulty of their being comprehended except by celestial minds, seem to justify a conclusion different from the one stated in the Essays,—that the narrative of St. Paul's vision would have been calculated to allure converts, and have been readily believed by those who gave credit to the apostle. Is there not reason to presume the contrary? that the narrative might have tended rather to repel than allure? that it might have contained things apparently absurd, certainly incredible, and, to most of the Corinthians, incomprehensible?—that, as such, the opponents of St. Paul might have taken advantage of the circumstance to undermine his authority, and to call in question the credit he already enjoyed? At all events, the occasion upon which St. Paul alluded to the vision, was one upon which his own authority, as an apostle, was disputed; and we have already observed, that it is contrary to the Divine Order, under the Christian dispensation, to adduce visions, as mere external evidence, with a view to allure converts, or to gain

credit. There is no end to the abuses to which such a proceeding might give rise. This, indeed, is the very ground upon which Dr. Middleton has objected to the visions recorded in the early ages of the church; and every reasonable person must see the force of the objection. Had, therefore, St. Paul related the particulars of his vision, with a view to the confirmation of his doctrines, or of his own authority in the church, he would have laid himself open to the objection, which has been so forcibly urged against many of the recorded visions of the early ages of Christianity. Besides, whoever attentively reflects upon the character of St. Paul, will see a very great difference between his mind and that of St. John; the former having a tendency to vain-glory, the latter, a tendency to humility. St. Paul admits, therefore, that a thorn in the flesh was sent him, to prevent his being exalted above measure by the privilege conferred upon him; and it is obvious, that his silence on the particulars of his vision accorded well with his desire to overcome this personal infirmity, and to avoid, as far as possible, even the appearance of glorying. Moreover, the vision of St. Paul seems to have had reference solely to himself; because it was granted with a view to support and encourage him under his various trials, and not for the purpose of benefiting or instructing the church in general. Hence, on the words, "which it is not lawful for a man to utter," a modern commentator* thus writes: "Because the apostle had not the authority to declare the mysteries revealed to him; this having been done, *not so much for the sake of the church, as for that of the apostle himself,* who had these convincing proofs of the divinity of the Christian doctrine vouchsafed to him, that he might be enabled to bear cheerfully all labors and all afflictions." In addition to this it may be observed, that some commentators are of opinion that St. Paul was positively forbidden† to declare the particulars of his vision; for that he says, it was not lawful for him to utter what he had heard and seen, as if he had received an express command to be silent on the subject; and this, too, in all probability, for some of the reasons that we have stated,—reasons which were altogether local and personal, or relative to the existing state of the church, but from which no sort of conclusion can be drawn, that God would, at no future time, grant to his ser-

* Bloomfield's Synopsis.

† See Hammond and Bloomfield's Synopsis.

vants the privilege of heavenly vision, or, if he did, that none to whom it was granted, should be allowed to declare what they saw. Indeed, the case of St. John refutes such a position.

Why, then, was St. Paul silent as to his vision in the third heaven? Because he was not commissioned to reveal to others what he had heard and seen. Why was St. John not silent? Because the Lord said to him, "What thou seest write in a book, and send it unto the seven churches which are in Asia." The question, therefore, I respectfully submit, does not depend upon any antecedent views we may entertain of the propriety or impropriety of a full, minute, or engaging account; but upon the fact of what the writers themselves actually saw, and were divinely commissioned to reveal to others; and, therefore, if the foregoing objection be in any manner urged against Swedenborg, it can be valid only on the ground, that he never had any intercourse with the spiritual world, or never had any divine commission to communicate what he saw,—which is merely begging the question.

But I now come to the consideration of the second objection, namely, That further knowledge with respect to the other world is forbidden; and that any desire to attain it originates in folly and presumption.

The Essays make mention, in their reference to this subject, of "*the idle and arrogant pretensions of human fraud and folly;*" and I confess, that the frequent occurrence of delusion and imposture, in cases of pretended revelations, affords just cause of the greatest regret; nor can I wonder that, constituted as is the human mind, these evils should have given rise to a strong prejudice against the writings of Swedenborg, and predisposed the minds of even pious and learned men to presume, without inquiry, that all alleged communications of knowledge respecting the other world, except such as are in Scripture, are equally false, delusive, and presumptuous. I cannot wonder, likewise, that even the visions recorded in Scripture should come to be treated with great unconcern by the generality of Christians; and that many should be very willing to take out of Scripture, if they could, those pages in it, upon which intercourse with the spiritual world stands recorded. What, however, in these matters distinguishes the wise from the foolish hearer? What, but that the one is blindly led by his prepossessions; the other, at least, reserves to himself the right of rational inquiry? the one idly floats down the

stream of popular opinion; the other is willing to search and see whether these things are so? It is to such a one that I appeal; and, for his own sake, entreat him to scrutinize and sift the pretensions of Swedenborg, in order to ascertain whether they are really false and delusive, and, as such, had their origin in fraud, folly, or presumption.

Much is stated in the Essays with regard to presumptuous knowledge and inquiry, and it may be well, in answering the objection founded upon this evil, to consider what is advanced upon the subject.

After speaking of this tendency of the human mind, and of consequent attempts to explain unrevealed mysteries, it is remarked, "Little as there is revealed to us of the condition of our first parents in Paradise, thus much (and let Christians never forget it) is plainly taught us, that they fell from their happy state through the desire of *forbidden knowledge*. It was by seeking from *men* to become 'as *gods*, knowing good and evil,' that they incurred that loss, to retrieve which God was made man, in Christ Jesus; who 'took upon him the form of a servant, and *humbled* himself unto death, even the death of the cross,' to redeem us, the children of Adam, whom *want* of humility had ruined, and to open to us the gates of eternal life, which presumptuous transgression had shut. How, then, can we hope to enter in, if we repeat the very transgression of Adam, in seeking to be wise above that which is written? By inquisitive pride was immortal happiness forfeited; and the path by which we must travel back to its recovery is that of patient and resigned humility."

Now, certainly the wickedness of an inquisitive pride can scarcely be exaggerated. I agree, therefore, in all that is said upon this part of the subject, and sincerely desire to be guarded from a sin so fatal. But how comes it to pass, that this presumptuous knowledge, of the attempt at which Swedenborg and his followers are sometimes thought to be guilty, is such as exposes the direful evils of presumption? How comes it, that the inquisitive pride, which is sometimes laid to his charge, leads him to acknowledge principles of child-like humility? How comes it, that the supposed arrogance of his self-intelligence brings him to the conclusion, that man of himself is nothing but evil, that in order to be saved he must be regenerated; while many, who are reputed to be more humble and unpresuming, inform us, that this is a mistake, that man is not so far gone from his original state, and that he is much better than

many would consider him to be? Surely an attempt to know the human heart, to purify its nature, and for this purpose to aim at more Divine light, could not have been the crime for which Adam was cast out of Paradise. Nay, it is replied, The crime or delusion of Swedenborg, consists in his laying claim to an open intercourse with another world, and pretending to a knowledge of mysteries which are beyond the grave. But, allow me to observe, this knowledge was not that which occasioned man to fall, but rather the knowledge from which he fell. How often do well-meaning persons reason backward upon this subject! as if the darkness in which we live was man's natural condition, and the light which we endeavor to attain was the occasion of his fall; as if open communion with heaven was the curse, and the closing of heaven the blessing; as if the presumption consisted in aiming at that Divine knowledge from which man fell, and the humility in continuing in that ignorance into which his presumption cast him! How is it, however, that the presumptuous knowledge, at which Swedenborg is supposed to aim, acts as a check to the presumptuous inquirer, and makes him not the receiver, but the unbeliever?

With regard to the subject of forbidden knowledge, it is certainly true, that our first parents fell in consequence of aspiring to it; but the question is, what that knowledge is which was forbidden. All knowledge is, I apprehend, forbidden, and Divine knowledge in particular, when we seek it from a wrong principle. However calculated it may be to purify the heart, if received in a right state of mind, we know that, if received in a wrong one, it has the contrary effect. Our Savior therefore said, even with regard to the truths of salvation, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes;" for assuredly it is a mercy, that God should conceal even the practical truths of salvation from those, who, if they received them, would only profane and corrupt them. In this case, then, even the truths of the Gospel may become a forbidden knowledge; just as the tree of life was ultimately as much forbidden, as the tree of knowledge of good and evil. While man ate of the tree of life, he was forbidden to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and while he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he was forbidden to eat of the tree of life. Let us inquire into the reason of this.

Solomon says, that wisdom is a tree of life, that is to say, Divine wisdom. Now, what was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Was it of the same nature with that of the tree of life, but only of a higher order? It must be so, if it correspond to the knowledge which the Essays maintain is forbidden. For when they speak of forbidden knowledge, it does not appear that they mean a knowledge essentially evil; but knowledge divine, which it is presumed God has withheld. Thus, not only in this, but often in the publications of other authors, when treating of this subject, it appears that the tree of life and the tree of knowledge of good and evil are confounded with each other; and we are supposed to be guilty of desiring to partake of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, when, in fact, we are but desiring to partake, from a right principle, of the tree of life. The consequence is, that the argument, as applied to the writings of Swedenborg, appears to be altogether mistaken. "Ye shall be as gods," said the tempter, "knowing good and evil." This was the end and object of their knowledge, to become as gods, to exalt their own self-hood, and to consider self as the source of wisdom. Here was a presumptuous principle. Why, then, was Divine knowledge forbidden to them, in this state? Because the principle was forbidden, from which the knowledge was sought; for the more the knowledge of good is sought from a principle of self, the more is the knowledge of evil increased; since evil is nothing but good perverted, as falsehood is nothing but truth perverted. It was in mercy, therefore, that God forbade his creatures to enter into Divine knowledge, from an evil principle: as long as they were in that evil principle, they were designed to continue in darkness, till the period should arrive when man should be restored, and, abandoning his evil state, should have a right to the tree of life. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is, therefore, the tree of the knowledge of good from an evil or selfish and sensual state; this being the state in which man is arrogant and presumptuous; relying upon his self-intelligence, and thus presuming to be as God. In this case, what is the nature of his knowledge? Are not its principles sensual and earthly, confined to the mere conditions of time and space? Are not his ideas and feelings merely natural? And what has the natural man ever done in regard to Divine wisdom? what, but to pervert and corrupt it? It is, therefore, the mere science or knowledge of Divine truth separate from Divine

life, and conjoined with a selfish and sensual nature, that is called the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; and it was to prevent the attempt to enter into Divine mysteries, or partake of the tree of life, from this state, that man was driven out from the gates of Paradise. Hence it was the state of man that caused even Divine knowledge to be forbidden, and not the nature of the knowledge itself; while, on the other hand, it was the nature of the knowledge itself (which was good profaned and truth falsified) that was the cause for which the tree of knowledge of good and evil was forbidden.

Now, Swedenborg maintains, (what, I submit, must be disproved before he can be refuted,) that it is in consequence of this tendency in mankind to the profanation of good and the falsification of truth, that God, in his mercy, has hitherto hid from them, both the Divine Wisdom contained in His Word, and the mysteries of heaven; and that in his mercy he will, as far as possible, continue to withhold them from all, to whom this knowledge would be pernicious. If, therefore, any one should be deterred from entering into the Internal Sense of the Word of God, or receiving that knowledge with regard to the other world, which is now placed in his power, then I have only to observe that, whatever be the causes which operate to influence him, he may be fulfilling the designs of Providence in a way in which he little suspects: and, as such, we should be the last persons to endeavor to persuade him to enter through those gates which, in the Divine mercy, had been closed upon him.

To these observations it may be well to add a few extracts from the Arcana Cœlestia, in illustration of those passages of Scripture to which we have been adverting:—

"126. *But of the tree of the science of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it, for in the day that thou eatest thereof, dying thou wilt die.* These words, together with the foregoing, signify, that it is allowable to know what is true and good, by perception from the Lord, but not from self and the world; or, that it is not allowable to inquire into the mysteries of faith, by what appertains to sense and science, whereby its celestial principle dies."

"128. The worldly and corporeal man says in his heart, 'If I am not instructed concerning faith, and the things relating to faith, by things of sense, so that I may see them, or by things of science, so that I may understand them, I will not believe;' and he confirms himself in his incredulity

by this persuasion, that natural things cannot be contrary to spiritual things; wherefore, he is desirous of being instructed from things of sense, concerning things celestial and divine; nevertheless, this is as impossible as it is for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. The more he desires to grow wise from such a ground, the more he blinds himself; till at length he comes to believe nothing, not even the existence of any thing spiritual, or of eternal life. This is a necessary consequence of the principle which he lays down; and this is to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which causes a greater death the more a man eats thereof. But whoso wishes to grow wise by a wisdom not derived from the world, but from the Lord, says in his heart, that he ought to believe the Lord, that is, the things which the Lord hath spoken in the Word, because they are truths; and this is the principle by which he governs his thoughts; and then he confirms himself in such belief, by things rational, scientific, sensual and natural; and removes from his mind whatever does not tend to such confirmation."

"129. It is in every one's power to see, that man is governed by the principles he assumes, be they ever so false, and that all his science and reasoning favor such principles; for innumerable considerations that tend to support them, are ever ready to present themselves, and thus he is confirmed in his false sentiments; wherefore he who assumes it as a principle, that nothing is to be believed before it is (from sense and science) seen and understood, can never believe; inasmuch as spiritual and celestial things are incapable of being seen with the eyes, or conceived in the imagination. But the true order is, that man be wise with a wisdom derived from the Lord, that is, from his Word; in which case, all things succeed in their right course, and then, also, he is enlightened in things rational and scientific; for man is never forbid to learn the sciences, inasmuch as they contribute to the use and delight of life; nor is he who is under the influence of faith forbidden to think and speak as the learned do in the world; but then he must be guided by this principle, to believe the Word of the Lord, and to confirm spiritual and celestial truths by natural truths, in terms familiar to the learned world, as far as lies in his power; wherefore his principle must be derived from the Lord, and not from himself. The former is life, but the latter is death."

"301. *Lest now he put forth his hand, and take also of the*

tree of lives, and eat and live for ever. When men become inverted as to the order of their life, and are unwilling to confess their life and wisdom to be derived from any other fountain, but from themselves and *proprium*, then, whatever they hear respecting faith, they reason about it, disputing whether it be so or not; and whereas, such reasoning is grounded in themselves, and in the things of sense and science in themselves, they must needs be led thereby to deny the things of faith; and in denying, to blaspheme and profane them; till at length they become so indifferent toward them, that they do not scruple to mix what is profane with what is holy. . . In the other life. . . . the separation of profane things thus joined with holy things, cannot possibly be effected but by infernal torment, of so terrible a kind, that if man was aware of it, he would be as cautious of falling into such profanation, as of falling into hell itself."

"302. This was the reason why the Jews, as being a people so prone to profanation, never had the mysteries of faith revealed to them; so that it was never directly declared to them, that they should live after death, or that the Lord should come into the world to save them; nay, they were kept in so great ignorance and blindness, and are still kept so, that they did not know, nor do they know at this day, that any internal man exists, or that there is any thing internal; for had they known these truths, or did they know them at present so as to acknowledge them, they are a people of such a nature that they would profane them; and thus preclude themselves from all hope of salvation in another life. This is what is meant by the Lord, in John, —'He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they should not see with their eyes, nor understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them.' This is the reason, too, why the Lord spake to them by parables, and did not explain their meaning to them; lest, as he himself says, 'seeing they should see, and hearing they should hear and understand.' For the same reason, likewise, all the mysteries of faith were hid from them, and concealed under the representatives of their church; and for the same reason, the style of the prophetic writings was in like manner dark and obscure." A further and melancholy illustration of these principles, we shall have to adduce as we proceed.

I come now to the consideration of a third popular objection, which is, That such knowledge, with respect to the other world, leaves no room for the exercise of faith.

The Essays, however, observe in one place, "The system furnishes abundant matter of faith;" in another place, "It may be said, indeed, that the trial of our faith, humility, and candor, in assenting on sufficient authority to mysterious doctrines, is a worthy and fit purpose for which such doctrines may be revealed. This is undoubtedly true, and the purpose may even be reckoned a practical one, since so good a moral effect results from such belief. If, therefore, none of the doctrines necessary to be revealed for other practical purposes, were of such a mysterious character as to serve for trials of faith also, we might perhaps expect that some things should be proposed to our belief, solely and singly for this latter purpose. But if both objects can be fully accomplished by the same revelation; if our faith be sufficiently tried by the admission of such mysterious doctrines as are important for other practical ends also; then the revelation of any further mysteries, which lead to no such practical end, is the less necessary, and consequently to be expected." This argument, as applied to Swedenborg, is good only upon the ground, that his revelations serve to try our faith, but have no other practical purposes; and this ground it is upon which, I presume, the objection is maintained, that "his system furnishes abundant matter of faith, and food for curiosity, but has little or no intelligible reference to practice."

Nothing is more remarkable in the history of the objections urged against the writings of Swedenborg, than their contradictory nature. The force of the argument just quoted, consists in this, that the pretended revelations of Swedenborg present to us only a trial of faith. Now, a not unfrequent objection against him is, that he leaves no room for this trial; that, even in his revelations, he endeavors to explain every thing, to introduce reason too much into divine things, to make divine mysteries too rational and intelligible, and thus to abolish blind faith to too great an extent: and, were I disposed to advocate the cause of faith, in the manner in which sometimes it is done, this is a line of argument I should adopt; for if it be true, that a state of darkness is best suited to a state of probation, then, inasmuch as we are, in this world, undoubtedly placed in a state of probation, a higher degree of knowledge is unsuited to our condition; and, consequently, there is a good *a priori* argument against any attempt to introduce further light. The very supposition, however, that Swedenborg's

revelations afford abundant matter only for faith, credulity, or belief, without adequate evidence, appears to be, in some cases, inconsistent with the idea of his aiming at presumptuous knowledge, inasmuch as a presumptuous knowledge supposes the understanding of that, which a blind faith presumes to be unintelligible. It is true that St. Paul says, "we walk by faith and not by sight;" nevertheless, there is one sense in which faith itself is sight, inasmuch as the Christian has faith in the truths of salvation, because he wills and understands them; his eyes having been opened, he is enabled to say, "one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." Faith, therefore, may be the same with knowledge, namely, with a saving knowledge; in which case, the Christian does not yield an assent to that which he does not understand, but to that which he does. Know what he may, there will always be something beyond his knowledge; the more he knows, the more will he see that the less he knows; and the more scope therefore will he have, for exercising a confidence in his Savior, with regard to that, the nature and design of which he does not yet perceive. A state of absolute ignorance, therefore, is not so consistent with a state of probation, as a state of light. There is nothing that tries us like truth. It is only in proportion as we know the truth, and endeavor to practise it, that we become subject to temptation. Knowledge, therefore, not ignorance, is, in this sense, the best suited to a state of probation. The Christian, who is far advanced in spiritual truth, has many more trials than the one who is comparatively ignorant; and the farther he advances, the greater are his trials, until he has finally found his rest. It is true that, for most wise and merciful purposes, spiritual darkness occasionally overtakes him; but then it comes to him not as the state in which God designed him to live, but as one of the trials of that state, and as one of the means which God uses for the purpose of introducing him, even in this world, into a greater degree of light. For this spiritual darkness is produced by the operation of infernal powers, and God never designed that we should live continually under their influence; although out of evil he brings good, from darkness he educes light. So far, however, from the present darkness of the Christian world being to them a state of trial or probation, the case is unfortunately the reverse; "they love darkness rather than light." It is true, the Christian does not thus love it, but that he desires further light. Unhappily, however, he is

told, that it is presumption to desire it; that it is aiming at forbidden knowledge; and that he ought to be content with his state. Certain, however, it is, that in proportion as we are ignorant of God, and of the nature of Heaven and Hell, we are ignorant of our own hearts; and the Almighty could no more design us to be ignorant of Him, and of the nature of Heaven and Hell, than he could design us to be ignorant of ourselves. As, however, we shall have occasion to advert to this subject, more or less directly, in other parts of our letter,—

Let us proceed to the consideration of the fourth objection, which is very nearly connected with the foregoing;—That were such knowledge useful, God would long since have revealed it.

This argument is very common, and arises out of, what I humbly conceive to be, a fundamental error with regard to the Divine Providence, or His moral government of the world. All the dispensations of Providence are introduced, not arbitrarily and independently of human nature, but in relation to its state. This principle, like others, is in general theoretically admitted, but practically denied. God does not impart or withhold divine knowledge from an arbitrary exercise of his will; but, whether he imparts or withholds, he does so in relation to the state of human nature. The same law, therefore, by which he regulates his dispensations in general, operates in regulating the degree of divine knowledge imparted, under a given dispensation, to any single individual. He adapts his general dispensations of knowledge to the general state of the world; and his particular dispensations of knowledge, under the general, to the state of the individual; and as individuals may not be in a proper state to receive that Divine Wisdom which would otherwise be imparted to them, so also may any number of individuals, or the church. When Adam was driven out of Paradise, he was prevented from eating of the tree of life; and why? Because, as we have seen, he was not in a proper state to partake of it. He himself, therefore, and not God, was the *primary* cause of Divine Wisdom being withheld from him. But suppose that, having left paradise, he should reason within himself and say, "I am in darkness, it is true; but this is the state in which God designed me to live: had he thought fit for me to know more, he would have revealed it."—Who does not see that, in this reasoning, there is both truth and untruth? Truth, because it certainly is the design of Provi-

dence that he should not know more, so long as he continues in that evil principle which was the occasion of his fall; untruth, because it was not the *original* design of Providence that man should be separated from him, and consequently live in ignorance. If he argues from his ignorance as a state originally designed by God, is he not attributing to Divine Providence the consequences of his own evil?

There is no doubt that, had further knowledge been useful to mankind at the establishment of the Christian dispensation, God would have revealed it; but what would not have been useful to the world eighteen centuries ago, may be useful to it now. The state of one portion of the world, at least, has immensely changed since that period. The progress of science is itself a proof of a revolution in the intellectual faculties; and education has made, and in all probability will continue to make, the human mind more receptive of natural and spiritual truth, than it had ever been previously. Experience, however, has proved, that when men have been accustomed to a given degree of light, however feeble, a greater degree becomes unpleasant. They love that to which they are habituated, only because they have been habituated to it. It is, in this respect, the same with spiritual as with natural light; after having long been withheld, its return is painful. We prefer the shadows and dimness of obscurity. It is more adapted to the weakness of our vision. The longer it lasts, the more are there among us to testify in its favor. We begin to see advantages arising from it, which we should not enjoy in a state of light. A state of darkness, we say, for instance, appears to be best suited to a state of probation. The duller our vision, the more opportunity have we for the exercise of faith; the more reason have we to be humbled by a sense of our ignorance; and the more occasion have we to be thankful for our humility. Thus, in the case of the boy born blind and couched by Mr. Cheselden, we read that, "Before he was couched, he expected little advantage from seeing, worth undergoing an operation for, except reading and writing; for he said, he thought he could have no more pleasure in walking abroad, than he had in the garden, which he could do very safely and readily. And even blindness, he observed, had this advantage, that he could go any where in the dark much better than those who can see; and after he had seen, he did not soon lose this quality, nor desire a light to go about the house in the night."—We observe, then, that, ante-

cedently to argument upon the subject, there is a predisposition in human nature to reject any greater light than that to which it is habituated; and therefore, in reasoning upon the subject, every one is bound to bear this circumstance in mind; and, while he is opposing what he considers to be false knowledge, to beware lest, at any time, he be unconsciously misled by the evil tendencies of his own nature, and oppose that which is true.

When, therefore, in the Essays, the Christian would refer the infidel to Scripture, and bid him ask why Scripture has said "nothing of the new bodies with which men shall arise, of the glories that shall be revealed in heaven, or has not given any account at all (or at least any from which a decisive conclusion can be drawn,) of the condition in which men are to remain during the interval between death and the resurrection," might it not be replied to the Christian by some fellow-believer, "You yourself have admitted, in arguing against the infidel, that the dispensations of God are adapted to the state of the world; if, therefore, no revelation of these circumstances has been made, it may argue that mankind have not hitherto been in a state fit to receive it; that, in such a case, a revelation might have been useless, or even injurious; but it does not prove that the state of man will never change; and, consequently, that there may not be a time when such a revelation may be useful, and even necessary.—Indeed, this is the same kind of *a priori* argument, which Paley has urged against the unbeliever, at the commencement of his evidences of Christianity; where he has reasoned from *the state of mankind* to the probability or improbability of a Divine revelation. The silence of Scripture, therefore, if it be silent, may serve to shew the unfitness of man, at a given period, to receive further light; but not a predetermination of God, under no circumstances whatever to impart it.

The question, therefore, is, whether mankind be in such a state as to render a revelation respecting another world desirable; whether there may not be thus an *a priori* argument in favor of such a revelation. I believe there is; nay, that there is an absolute necessity for such a revelation. At all events, the reader should know, that this is the ground upon which Swedenborg places the question; that practical utility is insisted upon by him, as the sole end and origin of all his alleged revelations with regard to the other world. He declares, what observation and experience

verify, that, throughout Christendom, there is a vast mass of scepticism with regard to the existence of a future state; nay, of positive infidelity. That even among the better portion of Christians, there is much avowed ignorance with regard to its nature, consequently, many false and delusive views prevailing, which are misleading their tens of thousands; and that this revelation was made by the mercy of the Lord, in order that mankind might no longer abide in that deplorable darkness, doubt, and delusion upon the subject, in which they had been living. The removal of error, therefore, is one grand object of Swedenborg's professed revelations; and, assuredly, this removal is a work of practical utility.

Now, I do not call upon the reader to believe in the following extracts from Swedenborg's works, in regard to Heaven and Hell, as containing truths; he is quite at liberty to reject them, and to consider them as a delusion: it will be sufficient for my argument, if I quote them only for the purpose of shewing, that, not the gratification of curiosity or a spirit of presumption, but, practical utility, was the end for which his revelations on that subject were written; and if the quotations be a proof of this fact, it is all I intend by introducing them. Swedenborg observes, then, (Heaven and Hell, Article 312,)

"It hath been given me to hold consort with the angels, and, likewise, to discourse with those who are in hell, and this now for several years, sometimes continually from morning to evening, and thus to gain information concerning Heaven and Hell, which is granted with a view to prevent the man of the church from continuing any longer in his erroneous faith concerning resurrection at the day of judgment, and the intermediate state of the soul, as also concerning angels and the devil; which faith, inasmuch as it is a faith in what is false, involves darkness; and, with those who think on the above subjects from their own proper intelligence, induces doubt, and at length denial: for they say in their hearts, how can so extended a heaven, with so many constellations, with the sun too and the moon, be destroyed and dissipated? And how can the stars at that time fall from heaven to the earth, when yet they are greater than the earth? And how can bodies, eaten up by worms, consumed by putridity, and dispersed before every wind, be gathered together again to their soul? Where, in the mean time, is the soul, and what is its quality, when without the sense which it had in the body?—not to mention several

similar inquiries, which, inasmuch as they relate to things incomprehensible, cannot become objects of faith, and in several instances destroy faith concerning the life of the soul after death, and concerning heaven and hell, and, with those subjects, others appertaining to the faith of the church. That they have destroyed faith, is evident from those who say, Who hath ever come from heaven, and told us that it is so? What is hell?—and is there any such place? What is meant by man being tormented in eternal fire? What is the day of judgment, which hath been expected for so many ages?—not to mention several other cases, which imply a denial of all such things. Lest, therefore, they who entertain such ideas, (as is the case with great numbers, who, by reason of their worldly wisdom, are called learned and well informed,) should any longer disturb and seduce the simple in faith and heart, and should induce infernal darkness respecting God, heaven, eternal life, and other things in connection with them, the interiors of my spirit have been opened by the Lord; and thus it hath been given me to discourse with all whom I have ever been acquainted with in the life of the body, after their decease, &c. &c. Several of those who were recently dead, when they saw themselves living men as before, and in a similar state, (for after death every one's first state of life is such as it had been in the world, but is successively changed with him, either into heaven or hell,) were affected with new joy at finding themselves alive, and declared that they had not believed this; but were much surprised that they should have lived in such ignorance and blindness, concerning the state of their life after death, and, especially, that the men of the church are in such ignorance and blindness, when yet they, above all others in the universal terrestrial globe, might have been enlightened on those subjects. On this occasion, they first discovered the cause of that blindness and ignorance: that it is owing to external things, which relate to the world and to the body, occupying and filling their minds to such a degree, as to render them incapable of being elevated into the light of heaven, and of viewing the things of the church beyond doctrinals; for, from corporeal and worldly things, when they are loved in the degree in which they are loved at this day, there is an influx of mere darkness, which obstructs the passage to higher light."

There is one more extract which I will add, though it be rather a long one, because it bears directly upon the subject of practical utility, and contains a further reply to the argu-

ments adduced in the Essays, concerning the silence of St. Paul, and the alleged silence of Scripture, in regard to some of those subjects of which Swedenborg has treated. In this extract, Swedenborg affirms, (Universal Theology, Article 768,) "That the coming of the Lord is not a coming to destroy the visible heaven and the habitable earth, and to create a new heaven and a new earth, according to the opinions which many, from not understanding the spiritual sense of the Word, have hitherto entertained. It is," says he, "the prevailing opinion at this day, in every church, that the Lord, when he comes to the last judgment, will appear in the clouds of heaven, with angels, and the sound of trumpets; that he will gather together all who are then dwelling on the earth, as well as all who are deceased, and will separate the evil from the good, as a shepherd separates the goats from the sheep; that he will then cast the evil, or the goats, into hell, and raise up the good, or the sheep, into heaven; and, further, that He will, at the same time, create a new visible heaven, and a new habitable earth; and that on the latter, He will cause a city to descend, which is to be called the New Jerusalem, and is to be built according to the description given in the Revelation, (chap. xxi,) of jasper and gold; and the foundation of its walls, of every precious stone; its height, breadth and length being equal, each twelve thousand furlongs; and that all the elect are to be gathered together into this city, both those who are then alive, and those who have died since the beginning of the world; and that the latter will then return into their bodies, and enjoy everlasting bliss in that magnificent city, as in their heaven. This is the prevailing opinion of the present day, in all Christian churches, on the coming of the Lord and the last judgment."—769. "In regard to the state of souls after death, both universally and particularly, it is the common belief, at this day, that human souls, after death, are mere aerial beings, of which it is impossible to form any idea but as of a vapor or exhalation, and that such being their state and nature, they are reserved to the day of the last judgment, either in the middle of the earth, where (as it is called by some) is their Pu, (*Hs*,) or in the *limbus* of the ancient Fathers. But on these points there are various opinions; some suppose them to be ethereal or aerial forms, and thus that they are like ghosts and spectres, certain of them dwelling in the air, others in woods, and others in waters. Some, again, suppose that the souls of the deceased are translated to the

planets or to the stars, and there have their abodes allotted to them; and some, again, that after thousands of years they return back into material bodies; but the general supposition is, that they are reserved for the time when the whole firmament, together with the terraqueous globe, will be destroyed; and that this is to be effected by fire, either bursting from the centre of the earth, or cast down from heaven in an universal blaze of lightning; that then the graves will be opened, and the souls that were reserved will be clothed again with their bodies, and be translated into that holy city, Jerusalem, there to dwell together on another earth in purified bodies, some in a lower region, some in a higher; for the height of the city will be twelve thousand furlongs, the same as its length and breadth, (Rev. xxi.)"—770. "When a clergyman or layman is asked, whether he firmly believes all these things, as that the antediluvians, along with Adam and Eve, and the postdiluvians, with Noah and his sons, and also that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, with all the prophets and the apostles, are, in like manner, as the souls of all other men, still reserved in the middle of the earth, or flying about in the ether, or air; and also, whether he believes that their souls will be again clothed with their bodies, and again enter into connection with carcasses eaten by worms, by mice, by fish, or, (as in the case of Egyptian mummies,) by men, and with skeletons parched in the sun, and reduced to powder; and, further, whether he believes that the stars of heaven will fall upon the earth, which yet is smaller than any of them; if clergymen or laymen, I say, be asked whether they believe all this, or whether such conceits are not mere paradoxes, which, like all other contradictory notions, are dispelled and dissipated by right reason, some of them will make no reply; some will insist that such points are matters of faith, to which the understanding must be kept in obedience; some, again, will argue, that not only these things, but also many others, which are above the comprehension of reason, are works of Divine omnipotence; and when they mention faith and omnipotence, sound reason is banished, and either disappears like a thing annihilated, or becomes like a spectre, and is called insanity: to this they will add, 'Are not such opinions agreeable to the Word? and ought not that to be the rule and measure of our thoughts and speech?' "—771. "That the word, as to the letter, is written by appearances and correspondences, and thus, that there is a spiritual sense contained in each

expression, in which sense truth appears in its light, whilst the sense of the letter is in shade, has been already shewn in the chapter on the Sacred Scripture. Lest, therefore, the members of the New Church should wander, like those of the old, in the shade of the literal sense of the Word, particularly on the subjects of Heaven and Hell, and of a life after death, and on this of the coming of the Lord, it has pleased the Lord to open the sight of my spirit, and thus to let me into the spiritual world, permitting me not only to converse with spirits and angels, and with my relations and friends, nay, with kings and princes who have departed out of the natural world; but also to behold the stupendous sights of heaven, and the miserable scenes of hell; demonstrating, by this, that man does not live after death in any region of the earth called *Pu*, nor flit about blind and dumb in air, or in emptiness, but that he lives a man in a substantial body, and in a far more perfect state, if he goes among the blessed, than when he lived before in a material body. To prevent man from plunging deeper into this false opinion, of the destruction of the visible heaven and the habitable earth, and thereby of the spiritual world, in consequence of that ignorance which has given rise to so much naturalism and atheism; and, to prevent such naturalism and atheism from spreading, as a mortification in a limb, through man's external mind, whence his speech originates, in like manner as they have already begun to affect and take root in the interior rational mind, especially among the learned, I have been enjoined by the Lord to publish some of the various circumstances of what I have seen and heard, as well concerning Heaven and Hell, as the Last Judgment; and also to unfold the Apocalypse, which treats of the Lord's coming, of the former heaven, of the new heaven, and of the Holy Jerusalem; which, when read and understood, will enable every one to see what is there meant by the coming of the Lord, by the new heaven, and by the New Jerusalem."

Now, whether the narratives of Swedenborg, with regard to Heaven and Hell, be true or untrue, enough has been said to convince every candid and impartial mind, that, in publishing them, he had at least a practical end in view. In the time of St. Paul, the perversions of truth above alluded to, did not exist as they do now. The doctrines of Christianity had then only begun to be preached; the corruptions of these doctrines were the work principally of subsequent ages. There could not have been, therefore, in

his time, those reasons for further revelation upon the subject, which there are now. I am convinced that this argument will weigh with every candid and impartial person, who is not predetermined, at all hazards, to reject every thing that militates against his own views. At all events, I submit, that the extracts above quoted, are a complete refutation of the assertion, that the alleged revelations of Swedenborg have little or no intelligible reference to practice. Such an assertion can be supported only upon the ground, that the subject of Heaven and Hell is one of no importance to mankind; that it matters not what views they entertain upon it; and, consequently, that all which can be said upon it, whether true or false, is equally non-practical. Such a principle, the distinguished author of the Essays cannot mean to advocate; and if he does not, his argument is at an end.

This brings us to the last objection,—That we are not warranted by Scripture to presume that any further revelation will be made.

Swedenborg informs us, as we have partly seen from what has been just quoted, that a state has been superinduced upon the church, which called for Divine interference. Now, it is not necessary to the present argument, to assume that what he has said is true; it will be sufficient to observe, that the degeneracy of the church is a subject which the Essays have omitted; an omission which is the more remarkable, as the author has there addressed himself to the unbeliever; and it is a point upon which the latter would particularly fasten, before the argument could have any weight with him. It is acknowledged, that the Essays do not profess to meet all the objections of infidels, nor is it to be expected that they should; but, in the particular arguments which are adduced, a fact is omitted, which, if true, most materially affects the conclusion, at least in regard to Swedenborg. Certain it is, that the objection we are now considering, is of no avail with a considerable portion of the Christian community. I say not how far the expectations are justifiable by Scripture; but this I say, that no small portion of the clergy believe that plain indications are given in Scripture of a further revelation, and that such a revelation has been required by the state of the church. This conviction prevails, not only among many of the clergy, but among many of the laity; and, I ask, which expectation is the more rational, that the Jews are to return to Jerusalem; that the Messiah is to

appear among us in person; and that the saints are to reign with him a thousand years upon earth?—or, that the state of man will undergo a progressive amelioration; that education will gradually extend, and ignorance disappear; that revelation will sanctify science, and convert it from the sordid uses of the world, to that of opening new wonders of Almighty wisdom; that the spiritual, moral, and intellectual faculties of man will thus all be enlarged; that the mysteries of the Divine dispensations will be more fully revealed; that, at the sound of the Gospel-trump, the dead shall be awakened from sin to newness of life, and thus to inward communion with God and his holy angels; that the kingdom of heaven shall be established within the soul; and that the tabernacle of God shall be with men; that he shall dwell with them; that they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them and be their God? Do the nations lie so dead in their graves that their state is hopeless? What was our Lord's gentle rebuke to Mary? "Said I not unto thee, that if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?"—That with the means heretofore used, such an event is improbable, I grant; but that it is improbable, if other means are adopted, is what we can scarcely pronounce, until we first know what those means are. And this I will say, that, when I look to the awful and sublime truths upon this subject communicated by Swedenborg; to the searching influence they exercise over the heart; to the stupendous means they reveal, as employed by God in the regeneration of the soul; to the silent, gentle, heavenly peace they diffuse from above; and when I hear that name associated with those of the lowest fanatics, or the grossest impostors; the sorrow of my heart finds its vent only in those words of the Savior, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!"

Such, then, are the principal objections which are commonly urged *in limine* against any further revelations with regard to another world; and I trust that, however I may have failed in producing hitherto any impression in favor of the possibility of additional revelations, I have not said any thing to justify the reader in believing, that I have been following profane and old wives' fables. If, however, he thinks so, I beg of him to suspend his judgment for a while, and to read what remains to be adduced, in the spirit of that prayer in which he says to God, "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in the heavens."

Beside these positive objections to the alleged revelations

of Swedenborg, there are innumerable obstacles which stand in the way of their reception, a few of which it may be desirable to notice. First, selfish and worldly principles; secondly, ignorance of the state of our hearts; thirdly, ignorance of the nature of the intermediate state; fourthly, unbelief in the proximity of the spiritual world; fifthly, erroneous views of divine operations; and, lastly, false philosophy.

The nature of these obstacles I propose separately to consider; and, in so doing, shall avail myself of the opportunity of gradually unfolding Swedenborg's views with regard to the spiritual world.

We begin, then, with the first obstacle, or selfish and worldly principles; by which I mean such as pertain to the natural man as distinguished from the spiritual.

Whether the revelations of Swedenborg are true or untrue, one thing is certain, that, in proportion as a man is wedded merely to the things of time and sense, he is unable rightly to understand them. I do not here speak of the higher mysteries he has unfolded in the Word of God, but simply of those principles of his philosophy of mind, which are in immediate connection with his alleged revelations concerning the nature of heaven and hell. For the same state which prevents a man from understanding the spiritual sense of Scripture, prevents him also from understanding the constitution of his own mind, and *vice versa;* and if he is ignorant of the constitution of his own mind, he must be ignorant of the laws and constitution of the heavenly and infernal kingdoms, since the human mind is itself either a heaven or a hell; and thus, according to the principles of Swedenborg, a knowledge of the laws and constitution of heaven is no other than a knowledge of the laws and constitution of the mind of the true Christian.

In works in general upon this subject, we see precisely the same error committed as in works of theology. Authors attribute that mystery to the subject which they might have attributed to themselves, and which arises from their own wrong method of investigation. They contemplate, for instance, the phenomena of the mind, before the mind has been taught how to originate phenomena; they refer to the subjects of consciousness, before the mind has been taught how, and of what, to be conscious. To come to a knowledge of the faculties of the mind, independently of that which constitutes the faculty, or of the objects upon which the faculties are exercised, is impossible. No fac-

ulty of reflection will enable the mind to see that which is not yet in it: no faculty of mind can see itself from itself; nor can we contemplate lower faculties from lower, but only from higher. Hence we cannot see the natural faculties merely from the natural, but only from the spiritual; and as the powers of the natural understanding are enlarged by the acquisition of natural truths, so can the powers of the spiritual understanding be enlarged only by the acquisition of spiritual truths. What should we think of any attempt to understand the structure and functions of the human eye, independently of any knowledge of the laws of optics, or even of the existence of light? And who, I ask, or what, is the real light of the soul? Is it not He, and He alone, who lighteth every man that cometh into the world? And what is this light? Not a merely natural, but a spiritual, a celestial, a Divine light. Contemplated in this view, the constitution of the human mind is seen unfolded, not only as to its spiritual, but as to its natural powers;* and when the mind is thus revealed to itself, then,

* It is well observed in His Grace's sermon on *the Shepherds at Bethlehem*, "We should rather point out to objectors that what is revealed is practical and not speculative; that what the Scriptures are concerned with is, not the philosophy of the human mind in itself, nor yet the philosophy of the Divine nature in itself; but (that which is properly *religion*) the relation and the connection of the two beings; what God is *to us*, what he has done and will *do* for us, and what *we* are to do and to be in regard to Him." To this remark is appended the following note extracted from Hind's History: "All religious inquiry, strictly speaking, is directed to the nature of God *as connected with man;* or, again, to the nature and condition of man as *connected with God*. Metaphysical discussions on the Divine nature, similar to those in which an attempt is made to analyze or arrange the principles of the human mind, are sometimes indeed confounded with religious views, but are really compatible with the most complete denial of all religion. Religious obligation arises not from the absolute nature of God, but from its relation to us."—No author exposes the folly of such speculations more than Swedenborg; hence his philosophy differs from that of others, in pointing out the reciprocal relations between the Creator and the creature; so that it cannot be contrasted with practical religion, but must be identified with it. This is the distinguishing feature of his works. The philosophy of the human mind in itself, without relation to God, and the philosophy of the Divine nature in itself, without relation to man, he maintains to be only philosophy falsely so called, nay, altogether a delusion. If the reader will pardon Mr. Law's pleasantry on so serious a subject, the following extract may illustrate to him the nature of the principles for which, here and in the sequel, we contend. "Modern metaphysics," says he, "has no knowledge of the ground and nature either of spirit or body, but supposes them not only without any natural relation, but essentially contrary to one another, and only held together, in a forced conjunction, by the arbitrary will of God. Nay, if you was to say—that God first creates a soul out of nothing, and, when that is done, then takes an understanding faculty and puts it into it; after that adds a will, and then a memory, (all as independently made as when a tailor first makes the body of a coat, and then add sleeves or pockets to it;)—was you to say this, the schools of Descartes, Malebranche, or Locke, could have nothing to say against

and not till then, in reading the narratives of Swedenborg with regard to Heaven and Hell, *it has the internal evidence of its own being in demonstration of the truth of what it reads:* but when the mind is closed, when it is shut up in ignorance of itself, it neither has, nor can have, any such evidence; the heaven it reads of, is as unreal to it as its own heavenly state; the hell it reads of, is as incomprehensible to it as the mystery of its own evil nature. How unwisely do we find persons arguing upon this subject! 'Look,' says one 'to the constitution of the human mind; what do you know even of yourself? and if you are ignorant of that which you yourself are, and of the objects about and around you, how can you be so presumptuous as to expect to know things of a higher nature?' But may I not reply, 'My Christian friend, if you are so much in the dark upon the subject, as you say you are, how do you know that your ignorance of higher things may not be itself the cause of your ignorance of lower; and hence, that you may be confounding consequences with causes?' If a man will not receive light, of course he cannot see; if he will not receive that which cometh from above, of course he cannot perceive the nature of that which is below. Suppose a person shut up in the dark should say, "If I see not the objects about me, nor even my own limbs, how presumptuous must I be to think of knowing any thing of an object which is so many millions of miles distant as the orb of the sun!" Surely, if he would consent to admit into his chamber the light of the sun, that which he imagines to be so remote, would illustrate to him the objects which are near; and, above all, would enable him to see himself.

Take, for example, the idea of eternity. Most persons think it impossible for us, in the present world, to be able to form any conception of what it is; and they argue, that if it be so difficult for us to form a just conception of the nature of time and space, how much more difficult must it be to form an idea of eternity!—Certainly, so long as a man's ideas are buried in the conditions of time and space, it is impossible that he should have any just idea of either;

it. And the thing is unavoidable; for, as all these philosophers were so far from knowing the ground of nature, how it is a birth from God, and all creatures a birth from nature through the working will of God, in and by the powers of nature, as they were so far from knowing this, as to hold a creation out of nothing—so they were necessarily excluded from every fundamental truth concerning the origin either of body or spirit, and their true relation to one another. For a creation out of nothing leaves no room for accounting why any thing is as it is. (Law's Spirit of Love, first part.)

but if he is able to elevate his mind above these conditions, it is not impossible: the difficulty does not lie in the object of the thought, but in the thought of the object, that is to say, in the natural and sensual state of the mind which thinks; for if a true idea of eternity could be obtained, and expressed clearly in words, the merely natural mind would no more comprehend it, than if the attainment of the idea were impossible; and not only so, but the ideas which it would attach to any words describing things eternal, would render the description absurd. The merely natural man can form no other idea of eternity than as of an endless duration of time; hence, when he speaks of predestination from all eternity, he introduces into his idea of predestination from eternity, the very idea which ought to be excluded; for in eternity there is no time, neither is there any duration, such as is suggested by the succession of his natural thoughts. Deprive, however, the natural mind of the natural idea, and it can form no idea at all; whereas, a spiritual mind may have a clear and distinct idea upon the subject. The more clear and the more distinct, the more correct; though it may never be adequate to the subject. How, then, is the true idea of eternity to be attained?—Not by any principles of self-intelligence; not by any abstractions of thought in the merely natural mind, however profound; but by an elevation of the soul out of the merely natural into a spiritual sphere; by a life above the conditions of mere time and space. Until this be effected, the mind remains merely natural; and how can a man abstract his thoughts from that which he himself is? It would be like abstracting himself from himself. If we are the creatures of time and sense, our thoughts must be formed according to those conditions. The simple-minded Christian, therefore, "whose life is hid with Christ in God," may arrive more easily at the true idea of eternity, than the profoundest intellectual, but merely natural mind that ever existed. The idea of time we know to be suggested by the succession of our natural thoughts and affections, or states of mind; in like manner, the idea of eternity is suggested by the succession of spiritual thoughts and affections, or states of mind, according to the order in which they take place in the process of regeneration. This process, however, is unknown; and the very principle upon which it is founded is denied. What is the consequence? The only possible way in which a person may arrive at a true idea of eternity, is closed against him; and no wonder, therefore, that the

subject should be supposed to be involved in impenetrable mystery. We have already observed, that, in the course of man's regeneration, one state of good and truth gives birth to another. This order, then, of succession, or of spiritual generation and birth, is that which suggests the true idea of eternity; being the same with that of progression in the spiritual life. Hence, as the sun of our system is the centre of our motions, as all time in this world is measured by motion, so the one great centre in the spiritual world is the Sun of Righteousness, and all the heavens about Him move in relation to Him as their centre; their motions being but progressions towards Him, which progressions are determined by the spiritual state or quality of the angel. Here, then, is presented to us an idea which, however obscure, confused, and indistinct, to the natural mind, is nevertheless clear, instructive, and consolatory, to the spiritual; being an illustration of those words of the Lord, "I am Alpha and Omega; the Beginning and the Ending; the First and Last; which was, and is, and is to come,—The Almighty."*

Again, let us contemplate what Swedenborg has said of Infinity, Immensity, or that in the spiritual world which corresponds with space in the natural. However true to the nature of things be the idea which he has suggested, and however edifying, it is one which, to the natural mind, may easily appear to be the infallible sign of a distempered fancy. For what are the ideas of such a mind with regard to heaven? Many have been the masters in Israel, who have not been reluctant to assign to it some locality in the visible material heavens; or some region on the outskirts of the visible universe, the path to which lies beyond the various suns and systems, where, as they imagine, the armies of the Holy One are encamped, and Jehovah has set up his throne of glory. What is all this, but the counterpart to those millenarian fantasies, by which the natural imagination is sated with marvels, while the inward thoughts of the heart and its affections are left untouched? They who can allow their feelings to be rapt into speculations of this kind, which set at defiance all divine order, and all the laws of sound philosophy, we cannot but consider to be enthusiasts indeed. Whatever loftiness may seem to attach itself to such a view of the subject, it is that

* For a fuller and clearer idea of this subject, the reader is referred to Swedenborg's Treatise on Heaven and Hell.

of the natural imagination only, or such as belongs to the conditions of mere space; and, if we introduce the merely natural idea of space into the spiritual world, I see not but we must introduce the merely natural idea of time; since we cannot separate the one from the other. The whole view of the subject is, indeed, that of the merely natural man; which has no more foundation in reality, than the mirage which excites the wonder of the traveller, and then disappears. Even some who profess these views, acknowledge them to be contrary to the visible order of nature; whereas the views which, as receivers of the writings of Swedenborg, we not only profess, but know to be truth, if there be any truth in the nature of things, is in the most perfect accordance with the laws of divine order; and, surely, this is some little evidence in its favor.

Any one who contemplates visible nature, must perceive in it a uniformity of arrangement, and hence universal order. Now, organization itself, particularly that of the human body, is the concentration, as it were, and embodiment of this order; every particular part of the body having its locality according to its use, and hence, according to its nature and quality; so that from this locality may be deduced the use, or nature and quality, of the part. On the same principle, in the other life, situation is according to nature and quality, or, in other words, according to state; and there being no inert matter there to suggest any other idea of distance, or one irrelative to state, it necessarily follows, that things which are there of a similar nature appear to be near to each other; things which are of a dissimilar nature, to be remote; that angels who are most the image and likeness of the Lord, appear to be the nearest to Him; and they who are least so, the most remote; that angels who most nearly resemble each other in the nature and quality of their affections and thoughts, are in the nearest consociation with each other; while those who less resemble them, appear proportionably distant; angelic society being founded on the principle of unity in affection and thought. Hence we see how it is, that situation, locality or place, is, in the other world, according to state; how it is, that distance and space there do not depend, as here, upon the number of leagues or miles between the objects, irrelatively to their state (as some worthy divines would lead us to suppose,) but upon the nature and quality of the objects themselves. For the laws and constitution of heaven are in perfect accordance with those of the hu-

man body, as also with those of the spirit of man, which, as we shall have occasion to mention, is an organized human form, and, in its Divine original, a form of heaven. For heaven is the body of Christ, even as the church, of which the archetype is the Divine Human of the Lord; and all in that body have their relative situations according to their natures and qualities. This we see exemplified even in the church below, which has been called by St. Paul, the mystical body of Christ; in which every member has its place according to its use and office, and thus, "as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office, so we, being many, are one body in Christ; and every one, members one of another." Heaven, therefore, even as the church upon earth, is the body of Christ, but without a material clothing; and the church of Christ upon earth, is heaven veiled over with materiality. The Sun of that heaven is the Lord Jehovah, for it is one which hath no need either of our visible sun or moon to shine in it, "for the glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." Every one is in the enjoyment of the glory of this Sun according to his reception of its beams, the wise being in the glory of their ineffable wisdom, the foolish being in the darkness of their ineffable folly; a darkness that is outer, in consequence of their external and sensual state;—a state by reason of which they are not in the body of Christ, and hence not in that of heaven and the church, but in the body of the dragon, that "old serpent, which is the Devil and Satan." Even while upon earth, therefore, the Christian is in heaven; already is he in blessed consociation with the angels of God; already a citizen of the Jerusalem which is above. Hence, even to the members of the church upon earth, the apostle declares, "Ye are come unto mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God—the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," &c.

Swedenborg, then, having shewn how the organization of the body, when in its divine order, is an outbirth of the form or body of heaven, and how all the angels have their respective places in heaven, as the several members of the body of Christ, according to their quality and office, denominates the various regions of heaven according to the names of the various parts of the body, and the angels ac-

cording to the offices they fulfil; these offices originating from the nature and quality of the angels themselves, according to their appropriation of the good and truth which proceed from the Lord. This is the principle acknowledged by every sound divine to be that upon which the church of Christ upon earth is constituted; it is that which is maintained by the apostle;—it is that upon which every nation upon earth is formed into a social system; it is that which is in most perfect accordance with the order of the visible universe; it is that which speaks with a voice, though silent to the natural sense, yet loud to the spiritual, that, "the heavens declare the glory of God:" yet this law is so divine, so true to the order of creation, so firmly maintained by the apostle, nay, though obscurely, by some of the best and wisest men of the church, has been a standing jest even with well-educated and reputedly religious persons. "But, I wot that in ignorance they did it, as did also their rulers."

The Jews of old knew not the truth when it came in person: is it impossible that Christians of these days should not know it, now that it comes in spirit? Verily! it cometh in clouds; yet every eye shall see it, and they also which pierced it! Let no one think that, in rejecting the principles of Swedenborg, he is only rejecting faith in a pretended prophet. Who is Paul? Who is Apollos? Who is Cephas? In following the gospel they preached, we follow not them, but the Gospel of Jesus Christ, even as he said, "He who receiveth you receiveth me, and he who receiveth me receiveth him that sent me." Whether Swedenborg were a prophet or not, is a matter of no consequence. It is trifling with the subject to place it upon this ground. The point with which we are concerned is, whether his principles are true: if they are, no matter who may be the mortal by whom they are communicated. God does not reveal his dispensations to the world, immediately from heaven, but mediately through his servants. He has a right to choose whom he will, nor have we a right to question his choice. The principles of Swedenborg we consider would be true, even though we knew nothing of the individual, or even that such a person had ever lived. To make it, therefore, a mere personal question, or to rest even upon any personal pretensions of a messenger, the truth of a message which appeals to us by its own internal evidence, is a proceeding which can no more be allowed in religion, than it can be allowed in science. I would not affirm or

deny that, in denominating Swedenborg a "pretended prophet," this is a ground upon which the principles of Swedenborg were meant to be opposed in the Essays; but it is one upon which opposition is generally raised; the very circumstance of his supposing that he was a messenger of the Lord to communicate to the church tidings with regard to heaven and hell, being itself looked upon as the infallible sign of a distempered fancy, and a self-evident refutation of the truth of what he had to communicate.

But I now come to the consideration of a second obstacle, and one which arises out of the former; I mean, ignorance of the state of our hearts. Let us see how this operates in preventing the reception of the narratives of Swedenborg.

The observation is not uncommon, at least among some portion of the Christian community, that were all the evils of a man's heart disclosed to him at once, he would not know himself; and that were a faithful portrait of his nature held up to his view, he would disclaim it as false and delusive; so apt are men not to acknowledge their evils when pointed out, and yet to confess in their prayers, that they are—"wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."—One cause of this error and ignorance is, that mankind have not yet learnt the true distinction between what is natural and what is spiritual; that they mistake merely natural for spiritual virtues; natural understanding, for spiritual perception. Let a man contemplate himself separately from all the endowments of his merely natural mind, whether inherited by birth or acquired by habit, and view himself solely in the Divine light. Though few are able to do this, how many would acknowledge that, were it done, they would see what previously they were little aware of! Suppose, then, a description of their character, as seen in this light, were placed before them while in their merely natural state, will they not reject it? And why? For the very reason of its being such as they professed to believe that, under such circumstances, it would be seen to be; namely, something altogether new and different from what they previously suspected. The fidelity of the portrait is the cause of its rejection. Now, Swedenborg maintains, that when the self-hood of man is divested of its external appearances, and laid open to view in spiritual light, it appears so deformed that it is impossible to conceive any thing more so; that he, therefore, who sees his own self-hood, when in the spiritual world, is

struck with horror at himself, and wishes to flee from himself, as from a devil. Any one who practically denies the truth of this principle, however he may theoretically have admitted it, must, of course, deny the truth of any narrative which is founded upon it; and here, therefore, we have an illustration of one cause of the rejection of the narratives of Swedenborg; a cause which is to be found in a practical ignorance, it may be also, a theoretical denial, of the moral principles of our nature. Evil and good are so mixed together in this world, even in the same character, that there is no point on which a man is more liable to be mistaken, that in forming a judgment with respect to his real spiritual condition. The mixture of good with evil makes evil appear better than it is; and the mixture of evil with good makes good appear worse than it is. Hence, in this world, we never see virtue in all its beauty, nor vice in all its deformity; the beauty of holiness surpasses our understanding, and the deformity of sin is altogether incredible; consequently, when the two are presented to us unmixed as they are in the other world, the narrative which so presents them, is as unintelligible or incredible as the principles of which they treat, nay, as the state of the reader is to himself; in fine, the whole account necessarily appears to be extravagant and visionary. This is the real cause of that semblance of caricature which some have attributed to Swedenborg's narratives. For it is one of the laws of the spiritual world, as explained by him, that, before passing to their final destiny, the good are deprived of their evils and the evil of their goods; that "He that hath, to him is given more abundantly; and he that hath not, from him is taken even that which he hath;" consequently, that after a spirit has passed through this change, he appears to be almost another; nevertheless, that he is virtually the same, the only difference being, that he appears in his real character, that the interior principles of his mind, which he had formed to himself in the world, have become openly visible, and that he is seen as he is; that hence, the intermediate state is a scene of the most astonishing disclosures, I will add, of the most incredible exhibitions, of human character; that many who had here been reputed to be first, are there seen to be last; and many who were here reputed to be last, are there seen to be first.

Here, then, we see one instance of the practical utility of Swedenborg's communications with regard to the state of man after death. They teach us how to analyze our

nature, and to distinguish the good in us from the evil; they shew us our real characters, and expose the mistaken principles upon which we judge of ourselves, and which, in this world, are misleading their tens of thousands. Assuredly, it is a great advantage to be able thus to contemplate evil separately from good, and good separately from evil, since we can thus arrive at a better knowledge of each; but as this separation cannot take place except in another world, I see not how we could better arrive at this knowledge, than by a narrative respecting that world.

The order of things in the world of spirits, is thus so entirely different from that which prevails in this world, that when discovered to us in our present state, the mind is not prepared for the contrast; and, judging from those habits of thought we have acquired (for we have no others from which to judge,) and these being founded upon the principles of order prevailing in the present life, the very truth of the narrative becomes to us a *prima facie* evidence of its falsehood, and we reject the whole as unreal, and fictitious. Unreal undoubtedly it is, relatively to our present estimations of things and modes of thinking; unreal undoubtedly it is, if we are never to undergo any change!—"But our fathers,—where are they? and the prophets,—do they live for ever?"

The intermediate state, then, being the scene of disclosure of the human character, upon the principles we have stated, it is necessarily a scene of disclosure of the quality and state of the church upon earth. Now, it has before been shewn upon what grounds Swedenborg has considered the received doctrines of the church to be untrue; and when to these untruths are added evils of life, it cannot be supposed that his alleged revelation with regard to the other world, places the church, in general, in a favorable point of view.

We have considered the case in regard to evils of life; let us consider it in regard to untruths, or falsifications of doctrine.

There are certain feelings and ways of thinking, with regard to worldly things, which are often received in society as common sense. Hence, in the ordinary affairs of life, if the professed member of the church possess a good natural judgment, an unerring and quick discernment, and if to these he add the outward appearance of religion, he is received, in general, as a wise Christian; yet, notwithstanding, he may, in the spiritual world, as Swedenborg

shews, be the image of folly, or, if I may be pardoned the expression, a spiritual fool; for, as I have before mentioned, in another world all merely natural good qualities are separated from the spiritual, and a man's judgment is there either strong or weak, according to his views of moral and spiritual things. If now, with every external accomplishment, he should, nevertheless, believe in the intercessions of the saints and of the virgin Mary,—when he passes into the other world, losing his natural and worldly discernment, he exercises only his spiritual; hence, there being then no wisdom without to conceal the folly within, all the ignorant and absurd conceits with regard to spiritual things, which, while upon earth, were inwardly harbored in his mind, but outwardly concealed, speak trumpet-tongued before God and his angels; and though in this world he was esteemed a wise man, in the spiritual world he is seen to be an idiot or a madman.

These are awful reflections,—but I proceed.

Take the case of a person who maintains the Tripersonality in the ordinary sense; who would disavow Tritheism more strongly than he? Who would point to his creed with more confidence, and say, "And yet there are not three Gods, but one God?" Yet all this, in another life, might pass for nothing, and he might be found to be a Tritheist, notwithstanding; for we are not judged there by outward creeds, but by inward thoughts; and Your Grace has well shewn, how a creed may be one thing, and a man's inward thought another. For the Protestant imputes to the Romanist idolatry: the Romanist denies it by pointing to his creed. We have no reason to suppose, but that many Romanists are conscientious in thinking the charge against them to be unfounded, and no more dream that they are idolaters, than the Tripersonalist that he is a Tritheist; nevertheless, we do not the less consider many a Romanist to be an idolater. Swedenborg shews how the case is the same in regard to Tritheism. Hence, when the Tripersonalist enters into the other world, and passes through his appointed changes, he cannot there speak from an outward creed, he can speak only from inward thought; and, consequently, a person who was not accustomed to attend to his inward thoughts, and who strenuously disavowed Tritheism in this world, might in the next maintain it in all its enormity; nay, more, he might not suppose but that he was uttering what was highly reasonable and inwardly true; because nothing is true or false to him, but in

relation to the interior principles implanted in his mind while upon earth.

Thus Swedenborg observes in the Apocalypse Explained, art. 649, "Whilst the Divine principle (of the Lord) is separated from His Human, His Divine (principle) is not yet acknowledged inwardly, but only outwardly; and to acknowledge it outwardly, is to acknowledge it only with the mouth, and not in the heart, or with speech only, and not in faith. That this is the case, may appear from Christians in the other life, where the thoughts of the heart are manifested. When it is granted them to speak from doctrine, and from what they have heard from preaching, then they attribute Divinity to the Lord, and call it their faith; but when their interior thought and faith are explored, it is found that they have a different idea concerning the Lord, which is as of a common man, to whom nothing divine can be attributed. The interior thought of man is the real ground of his faith; wherefore, such being the thought, and thence the faith of his spirit, it is evident, that there is not any acknowledgment of the Divine (principle) in the Lord and from the Lord, in the Christian world, at the end of the church. In a word, there is, indeed, an external acknowledgment of the Divine (principle) of the Lord, but no internal; and external acknowledgment is of the natural man alone, but internal acknowledgment is of his spirit itself; and the external is laid asleep after death, but the internal, being of his spirit, remaineth."

We have observed, then, that every one believes that, in the spiritual world, the moral order of things will be different from the outward order which prevails upon earth; but, nevertheless, if we place before him a narrative which embodies these principles, he will, generally speaking, not believe it, for the reason of its presenting to view that in which he professed to believe, which he thought he did believe, but which, when realized, it is seen that he does not; although, had he established in his mind the right distinctions between good and evil, he would have the evidence of his own heart and understanding for the truth of that which was presented to him, and, as such, would give it full credence. Now, in another life, good and truth being separated from the evil and the false, and all angels being thus the form of their own good and truth, and all devils the form of their own evil and false, it follows, that any narrative respecting angels and devils, founded upon this principle, must involve no other than a complete sys-

tem of morals, and of the laws of our mental constitution. The only difference between a narrative of this kind, and such a system presented separately from the narrative, would be, that the former would treat of principles as embodied in real existence, and the latter would treat of them in the abstract. Now, if certain principles in the abstract be true, they cannot be rendered false by embodying them into action, or by forming them into a dialogue; for even were the persons fictitious, still the principles would be true: at all events, we may contemplate the principles independently of the persons; hence we may contemplate the principles contained in Swedenborg's narratives, independently of the angels or devils in whom they are supposed to be realized; and if, in perusing these narratives, the reader admits the truth of the principles, but denies the reality of the persons, he is at liberty to do so; though I see not what he will gain by it, as the persons are only the personations of the principles. On the other hand, if any one denies the principles, of course he rejects the narrative altogether; and in this case, let him not think that he is only denying the existence of imaginary persons, or only rejecting visions as visions; far from it,—he is rejecting principles,—principles involving the vital distinctions between light and darkness, good and evil, holiness and sin, heaven and hell. He must not, therefore, deceive himself with the idea that, in this case, he is only repudiating the dreams of some visionary, who is demanding assent without adequate evidence; he is rejecting that which affects the foundation of all belief in another world, all belief in rewards for the righteous, and punishments for the wicked. For what, in the works of Swedenborg, is heaven shewn to be? It results, as we are told, from the Divine Human of the Lord, whence also results the form of heaven; and as this Divine Human is Divine goodness and truth, so has every angel his locality in the body of heaven, according to his appropriation of these principles. Heaven, therefore, is only the realization of these principles in the creature, as hell is their negation and perversion; angels being the personations of heavenly principles, and devils of such as are infernal. To reject, therefore, Swedenborg's narratives of heaven and hell, is to reject not persons merely, but principles,—the essential principles of good and evil,—yea, the very Divine Human of the Lord Himself. Suppose Newton, in presenting his *Principia* to the world, declared that the truths it contains were revealed to him by spirits;

should we be justified in rejecting the work because we disbelieved in the source from which it was declared the work had proceeded? Surely, we should let the principles it contains stand or fall by their own merits; at all events, if we rejected the principles because we disbelieved in the persons as their alleged authors, is it not plain that we should be rejecting the very laws of nature?

Not only in the Essays, but in the works of other authors, there is, moreover, what I cannot but conceive to be an inconsistent mode of reasoning. Writers, in general, maintain, that example is better than precept, that the practical character of Scripture is seen in its not treating of virtue in the abstract, but as embodied in action. Now, if example have more influence than precept, living characters than abstract principles, is it of no practical utility to contemplate precept and principle as realized in living beings, rather than as mere abstractions?—As usual, however, the position is speculatively admitted, but practically denied; for no sooner is the principle verified in practice, than the whole is pronounced to be non-practical. Strange, that the moment a principle is practised, it should be pronounced to be speculative! the moment it is realized in the life and being of the creature, it should be declared to be visionary! Believe me, my Lord, there is no sincere receiver of the writings of Swedenborg, but feels often deeply affected by Swedenborg's narratives of the holiness, love, and purity of the angels. I have known of those who, frequently, cannot read them without being affected even to tears; and this by descriptions so simple and unpretending, that an ordinary reader might see nothing in them; while, on the other hand, the scenes which Swedenborg describes as existing among lost spirits, have often awakened such feelings of terror and pity, that the mind is alternately overcome by horror at the sinfulness of sin, and lost in feelings of compassion for the woes and darkness of the fallen. Are these, my Lord, states of mind which are to be denounced as visionary? Are they to be presumed, as having no beneficial influence on our life and conduct?—If so, the moral sense is only a name; and an awakened conscience—the greatest delusion.

I come now to the consideration of the third obstacle to the reception of Swedenborg's narratives, or, ignorance of the nature of the intermediate state.

I say, ignorance;—although I might have said, a denial, in numerous instances, of its being a state of conscious-

ness. As many, however, have considered the evidences for and against the nature of this state to be nearly balanced, and that Scripture is silent upon the subject; as, therefore, they are only *uncertain* whether or not, after death, our being be virtually extinct till the judgment day, I have thought it better to use the term ignorance than denial; although there are professed Christians who are not reluctant to avow their denial, that the intermediate state is a state of conscious existence. The ignorance which does not arise from evil of life, or from perverted knowledge, would be no impediment to the reception of Swedenborg's alleged revelations on this subject; the real obstacle lies in the cause by which a far more deplorable ignorance is produced,—I mean sensual and worldly principles; principles which produce the same kind of ignorance with regard to the nature of heaven and hell. It is affirmed by some, that Scripture is silent upon the subject of the intermediate state; whereas, Swedenborg maintains that it is not altogether silent, but that the same cause which operates in producing doubt with regard to the nature of this state, as also of heaven and hell, operates in preventing us from understanding what Scripture has intimated upon the subject; that, were the mind less influenced by merely natural ideas, the state of man after death would, to a certain extent, be so obvious, that we should not require for our instruction a distinct revelation on the subject.

It is lamentable to observe, how the theology of some divines is ever gravitating toward the extinction of our being. The curse of death which Adam underwent, they consider to be that of annihilation; hence they maintain that, when it is said, "all in Christ shall be made alive," the restoration of the soul from a state of annihilation is meant; and even after they have labored to prove this position, down they sink again into the doctrine of oblivion and virtual nonentity; for they maintain, either that the interval between death and judgment is a state of sleep, unconscious being, or absolute destruction of existence; or else, that we have no reason, and, consequently, that it is presumptuous, to conclude either one way or the other, on the subject. Tell an unbeliever that, when the body dies, we know not but the soul sinks into a state of sleep for an indefinite period, and perhaps there will be some little difficulty in persuading him, that there is much difference between an infinite and an indefinite duration of sleep; nor do I think any argument will be with him of much avail, if we admit that Scripture is silent upon the subject.

Now, it is one great object of Christianity to purify, warm, and invigorate the affections. Suppose, then, we assure a truly Christian mother, who was grieving over the loss of her child, and whose only consolation was that the Lord had called it, that it was quite possible the object of her affections was in a state of unconscious existence, and that we had no evidence from Scripture that he would not so continue for myriads of ages; would not such a communication be revolting to her feelings? Is not the very principle of love, in her mind, immediately associated with that of life? Why, then, should Christianity first exalt and animate her affections, and then trample them to the ground? Would not such a religion be cruel?—But suppose that, knowing little of religion, she should have a strong natural affection for her child; would it not induce her to wish, to hope, and hence to believe, that her child was somewhere in a state of conscious happiness? How is it, then, that neither natural nor spiritual affection induce some persons to come to the conclusion, that the intermediate state is one of conscious existence? I know not, except it be, that both are counteracted by false doctrine. For how accordant with a disbelief or doubt, of an intermediate state of consciousness, is the doctrine of the re-union of the same material body to the soul? since certain it is, that, until this re-union take place, the soul cannot enter into her final destination; cannot be in heaven or in hell; no state of preparation for either, now that she is departed, is supposed to be requisite; so that the circumstance either of her having nothing to do, or of its being unknown whether she has any thing to do, harmonizes well, or at least is not very inconsistent with, the supposition of a state in which—*nothing is done.*

The belief, however, of the doctrine of the re-union of the same body to the soul, has been permitted by Divine Providence, as Swedenborg observes, for a good reason; namely, that if mankind had not believed in the resurrection of the body, they would often have not believed in any resurrection at all. For it being denied by some, that the soul or spirit is any distinct substance; it being asserted by others, that there is no evidence as to what it is, so as to enable us either to deny or affirm; and with regard to most persons, any thing relating to it being beyond their comprehension; the doctrine of its resurrection would long since have been rejected altogether, had not a belief in the resurrection of the body been permitted; for the body being

a carnal, natural, corporeal, and sensual object, and hence more within the comprehension of the natural mind, the members of the external church can the more readily believe in its resurrection, and thus preserve in themselves that idea of a resurrection, and hence of a future life, of which, otherwise, they would have been deprived.

Upon this subject, permit me now to add an extract from those very revelations of Swedenborg, which have been alluded to in the Essays, as a proof of a distempered fancy:—

"4622. Arc. Cœl. The generality do not apprehend, that spirits and angels have sensations much more exquisite than men in the world, viz. sight, hearing, smelling, somewhat analagous to taste, and touch, and especially the delights of the affections; yet, if they had only believed that their interior essence was a spirit, and that the body, together with its sensations and members, is adapted only to uses in the world, and that the spirit and its sensations and organs are adequate to uses in the other life, in this case, *they would come of themselves, and almost of their own accord, into ideas concerning the state of their spirits after death;* for, in such a case, they would think with themselves, that the spirit of each is that very man himself who thinks, and who lusts, who desires and is affected; and, further, that all the sensitive principle which appears in the body, is properly of the spirit, and belongs to the body only by influx; and these things afterwards they would confirm with themselves by many considerations, and thereby, at length, would be delighted with the things appertaining to their spirit, more than with the things appertaining to their body. In reality, also, this is the case, that it is not the body which sees, hears, smells, feels, but its spirit; wherefore, when the spirit is stripped of the body, it is then in its own sensations in which it had been when in the body, and this in a more exquisite degree; for corporeal things, as being respectively gross, rendered the sensations obtuse, which also became still more so in consequence of being immersed in earthly and worldly things. This I can positively affirm, that a spirit hath more exquisite sight than a man in the body, and also more exquisite hearing, and, what will seem surprising, a more exquisite sense of smelling, and especially of touch; for spirits see each other, hear each other, and touch each other. He who believes in a life after death, might also conclude this from the consideration, that no life can be given without sense, and that the quality of the life is according to the quality of the sense; yea, that the intellec-

tual principle is nothing but an exquisite sense of interior things, and the superior intellectual principle, of spiritual things; hence, also, the things of the intellectual principle and of its perceptions, are called the internal senses. With the sensitive principle of man immediately after death, the case is this: as soon as man dies, and the corporeal parts grow cold, he is raised up into life, and, on this occasion, into the state of all sensations, insomuch that, at first, he scarcely knows any other than that he is still in the body; for the sensations in which he is, lead him so to believe; but when he perceives that he hath more exquisite sensations, and this especially when he begins to discourse with other spirits, he then takes notice that he is in another life, and that the death of his body was the continuation of the life of his spirit, &c. &c.—But I am aware, that the things which have been heretofore said, will not be believed by those who are immersed in corporeal, terrestrial, and worldly things, that is, by such of them as hold those things for an end; for these have no apprehension of any thing but of what is dissipated by death. I am aware, also, that neither will they believe who have thought and inquired much about the soul, and have not, at the same time, comprehended that the soul is man's spirit, and the spirit is the very man which liveth in the body; for these cannot conceive any any other notion about the soul, than that it is some principle of thought, or of flame, or of ether, which only acts into the organical forms of the body, and not into the purer forms which are of the spirit in the body; and thereby, they conceive it to be such a principle as is dissipated with the body; and this is especially the case with those, who have confirmed themselves in such notions by views of the subject, being puffed up through the persuasion of their own superior wisdom."

Closely connected with ignorance of the nature of the intermediate state, or unbelief in its being a state of conscious existence, is also an unbelief in the proximity of the spiritual world. This is the fourth impediment to the reception of Swedenborg's alleged revelations with regard to the spiritual world, which we proposed to consider.

We have mentioned above, that there are those who believe that the spirit, upon its departure from the body, does not enter into a state of consciousness; hence it follows, that heaven and hell are at some incalculable distance. There are others who profess to be uncertain upon the subject. Both parties appear to agree that a state of unconsciousness after death, however long, will appear, *at the*

judgment day, to be very short.—In reply to this we would observe, that *at present* it appears to be very long. The question is, not what it will appear to us at some future, and, it may be, remote period; but what it appears to us *now*. Once remove from the minds of men the present application of a truth, and we remove its practical application. No matter, they will say, what the time may appear to us at a far distant period; a thousand years, it may be millions of ages, appear to us *now* very long. This constant tendency to confine our belief only to the future, produces a practical unbelief with regard to the present. Why, says Archbishop Tillotson, (Sermon 14,) do men say they will repent at some future period?—Solely because it is future; when the future comes to be present, they will have the same reason for deferring their repentance. They will consent to a future repentance, but not to one that is present. So it is with the world in general, with regard to heaven and hell. They will admit the existence of a heaven and hell, which are future and afar off; but they will reject all that is said about them, if considered as present and near. Now, all that Swedenborg has said on the subject, tends to oppose this evil; but those doctrines which are apt to defer every thing to the future, tend to encourage it. Procrastination will harmonize well with a speculative, but not with a practical belief. Hence, we see those who theoretically believe in the ministration of spirits, reject the doctrine when it is brought home to them, and made practically to apply to their conduct. They will receive it as an article of speculative belief; but they reject it as a rule of practice. So long as it is in a state of theory, they will consider it orthodox; make that theory practical, and they reject it as visionary. Why is the doctrine of Swedenborg, with regard to the ministration of spirits, rejected? Frequently, only for the reason, that he has treated as matter of fact, what with many is merely possibility, it may be, probability; that he has imparted a truth and reality to what they profess to be their creed. Place much of what he has said about the other world, in a speculative point of view, and many will consider it to be reasonable; present it to them as matter of fact, and it is absurd; afar off, it is true; at home, it is false.

In illustration of this circumstance, allow me to select the observations of one writer out of many who might be quoted; I mean Archbishop Tillotson, who cannot be accused of enthusiasm, and who observes (Sermon 75,) "It is very probable that good angels are ready to do good offices,

just contrary to those of evil spirits; that is, to employ their best diligence and endeavor for the salvation of men; and that they are very sedulous and officious to restrain, and pull back from sin, and to excite and solicit them to that which is good; and, in a word, to do all they can to help forward the repentance and conversion of sinners. And this may reasonably be collected from that passage of our Savior, where he tells us, that 'there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.' And if they be so glad of the repentance of a sinner, we may easily imagine how forward they are to further and promote so good a work. And when sinners are brought to repentance, we have no reason to doubt, but that the angels are as ready to assist their progress in goodness." Now, what has Swedenborg imparted to us upon this subject? A verification of the fact. Yet it is rejected. As long as it is said to be very probable and highly reasonable, who objects to it? Put the theory in action, and there are no words to express the folly of doing so, and the absurdity of the theory itself. Men will believe in a spiritual world afar off, but not in one that is close to them. They will believe in a spiritual world which they may one day visit, but not in a spiritual world which they are already in. They will believe in an eternity that is to come, but not in one in which they are now living; an eternal future is their belief, but not a present eternity; they are believers, in fine, in what they conceive is to be, and unbelievers in that which is. This, my Lord, is one of the moral barriers which is raised, not only against Swedenborg's doctrine of the ministration of spirits, but against that of every one, who shall venture to contemplate as actual that which is received as speculative. And this predisposition to speculative belief and practical unbelief, belongs not merely to one individual or another; it is an inherent tendency of human nature; it influences every one more or less; even the learned and pious are not proof against it, for it is one of the consequences of our fallen nature.

Let a man once be deeply impressed with the conviction that while he is living in this world, it is his body only which is in time and space, and moves from one outward place to another; that his spirit is not in time, but in eternity; not in the outward and visible world of space, but in the inward invisible world of spirits; that even now his spirit is inwardly associated with good and evil angels, as, in the outward world, he is associated externally with good and evil

persons; and it is impossible that he could feel that repugnance to the very thought of communion with another world, which so many actually feel. For if the spirit of man never was (like the material body in which it lives,) a tenant of this outward world of space and time, and never will or can be; if the world of spirits be as near to the spirit, as the world of matter to the body; if good and evil angels are as near to us inwardly, as good or evil men in this world are near to us outwardly; if angels are much more closely consociated with us than any earthly relations possibly can be; if they take an interest in all our thoughts and feelings; if we cannot breathe a breath, or stir a step, or lift an arm, or think a thought, or feel an affection, without the mediation of the spiritual world, why should we reckon it so strange a thing that, at least in some particular instances, God should allow this to come to the consciousness of the individual; especially when many admit, that this was actually the state in which man was originally created? Why is it any more a species of madness in Swedenborg to see the spiritual world, than it is in the departing souls of the righteous? Why is it an insane fancy in the one; and holy consolation to the other?—a reality in the dying; a delusion in the living?—a blessed privilege to the departing saint; a presumptuous crime in the living Christian?

That the mind and spirit are not (like matter) in time and space, is, however, a speculative doctrine, the article of a theoretical creed; nor need those who assent to it alter their practice in consequence of admitting it to be true. Now what is the result of this speculative faith and practical infidelity? I say it with sorrow; experience has shewn that such unbelieving believers are among the most determined opponents to the narratives of Swedenborg; since, as they have always given themselves credit for Christian faith, and yet their belief has produced no practical effects upon their mind, their hearts are often more inaccessible than even those of professed unbelievers; for, in the words of Your Grace,* "As those who have been long accustomed to encounter dangers, or to witness sufferings, without giving way to the corresponding emotions of fear or pity, are far more callous to such emotions than those who have not been conversant with scenes of that kind; so those who have been long familiarized to the thoughts of religion without applying it to their lives, are far more incurably hardened than if they had never heard nor thought any thing upon the subject."

* Essay 4, Sect. 8.

It may be said, however, that a man is not to be considered an unbeliever in the world hereafter, merely because he does not believe in Swedenborg's accounts of hell. Certainly not; upon one condition, that Swedenborg's accounts of heaven and hell are untrue; for if they are true, I presume it will be granted, that he must be considered, in some sense, an unbeliever. A man believes in a God; he does well: but is the God in whom he believes the true God, or an idol of his own imagination? A man believes in a future reward for the righteous, and punishment for the wicked; he does well: but are the heaven and hell in which he believes, such as really exist, or only the creature of his own imagination? Is he a believer in the true God, in heaven and hell as they really are? Or, after all, is he a believer only in himself, that is, in his own ideas of God, heaven and hell; and, consequently, an unbeliever in the true God, in heaven and hell, as they really exist? If heaven be a state of good, and hell a state of evil; if the distinctions between heaven and hell are thus no other than the distinctions between good and evil; the heaven which is so described, is as real as the good of which it consists; the hell which is so described, as real as the evil of which it consists. To reject, therefore, the reality of such descriptions of heaven and hell, is to reject the reality of the principles of good and evil in which they consist; for heaven and hell are only the realization of those principles; and it remains for those who reject them, to prove how they can do so, and yet be believers in Christianity. I speak not of those who reject them in ignorance, and who, consequently, receive that as true in the Bible, which they are taught to believe is false in the writings of Swedenborg. I speak only of those who reject Swedenborg's writings *after examination;* of whom, I am happy to say, there are but few.

I know it has been objected, that he has contemplated as real essences, what are only ideal abstractions; that he has given, as every madman does, a local habitation and a name to mere idealities; that his thoughts and feelings had become so vivid, as to be endowed with an imaginary being; and that, in this state, he mistook them for real existences. Now it is fully granted, that wherever such a state exists, it is the mark of a distempered mind. But, I would ask, Is it not equally the mark of a distempered mind, to mistake for mere imaginary existences things which are real? Are the eternal distinctions between good and evil, real or ideal? Are good and evil, in themselves, mere idealities? Are

heaven and hell empty abstractions? Are they no where substantiated? Are we wise only when we have *ideas* of heaven, and foolish when we realize that heaven in our own hearts? Does not the essence of a Christian's life consist in his realizing, in his own being, that of which he at first forms only an idea? Is it not his folly to treat as ideal that which is real, and to mistake the shadow for the substance? If the principles of good and evil, as laid down by Swedenborg, be true, his narratives of heaven and hell must be true; there is no alternative. We have the same evidences for their truth, as we have for the existence of any heaven and hell at all. If the laws of gravitation laid down by Newton be true, the constitution of our system must be a realization of those laws. We cannot consider those laws to be true; and a belief of their realization in nature to be the mark of a distempered mind.

If, now, a man realizes a good and truth in his own heart, he so far realizes within it a heaven; for the heaven to which he is to go, is no other than the heaven which he has formed within himself. If his own experience assure him, that, by a life of goodness and truth, he has realized a heaven within himself, he is a standing witness to himself that there is a heaven corresponding to the life of good and truth which he has lived: and to tell him that this is a fancy, an imagination or the mark of a distempered mind, is only to tell him that his fancies have more foundation in fact than other peoples' truths; his day-dreams more of reality than other peoples' waking meditations; his madness more soberness and truth than other peoples' sanity. Like Cicero, speaking of the immortality of the soul, he will say, "If it be an error, it is one which I willingly believe;" or, like the apostle, If we are fools, "we are fools for Christ's sake."

As, however, we shall have again to advert to the distinction between what is real and what is ideal, we shall now proceed to the consideration of the fifth obstacle, or that which arises from erroneous views of the Divine operations.

It is a common observation,* that all good feelings and

* *Note to the American Edition.*—No reference appears to be made in the following paragraphs to the doctrine of *Immediate Influx;* Mr. Clissold, probably, not regarding it as pertinent to the course of his argument. But as the omission may, perhaps, lead to an erroneous impression with those unacquainted with Swedenborg's writings, it seems proper to state that they teach that there is both *immediate* and *mediate* influx into the minds of men; immediate from the Lord into every angel, spirit and man; and also mediate through the spiritual world. (See A. C. 6058, 6472.)

thoughts are produced in us by the operation of the Holy Spirit,—an observation which is perfectly true; but these operations are often considered to be immediate. What is the consequence? The ministry of angels, or the intermediate operation of the spiritual world is, in this case, entirely overlooked; for if the Almighty infuses into us good dispositions and thoughts immediately, or without the intermediate operations of the spiritual world, then is the ministry of angels unnecessary. In this case, a belief in their attendance upon man may be a speculative article of faith, but it is one which is practically useless; for if the Holy Spirit does not work by their means, then are they not concerned in His operations; consequently, all our ideas of what is the part which is actually taken by good spirits in the work of man's salvation, become obscure and confused; the result of which is, that persons are led to think little of the subject (as they naturally do of every thing, which only perplexes their minds, and on which they imagine no determinate knowledge can be obtained;) hence, they as naturally pass into a state of indifference with regard to it, then of doubt, and, finally, of unbelief.—Besides, conceiving that their thoughts and feelings are produced immediately by the operations of the Holy Spirit, and resolving all the mental changes through which they pass, into the immediate influence of his power and the immediate exercise of his will, they are apt to look upon their experiences as so many unconnected facts, wholly independent one of the other. The relation between cause and effect is thus destroyed, consequently, all idea of divine law; inasmuch as they consider the only law to be God's inscrutable will, which, as they think, acknowledges no law at all. The case is the same with regard to their views of the other world. For what suggests to us the idea of the wisdom of God? Is it not the profound adaptation of means to an end; the vast chain of end, cause, and effect, extending through creation; and, hence, the uninterrupted relation of the whole to the part, and the part to the whole? Destroy the idea of relation, and all idea of order is destroyed: hence, all idea of law, and all idea of wisdom. Such, then, is what they do in regard to the spiritual world, who consider the operations of God to be immediate; the consequence is, they become proportionably ignorant of God, and more particularly of the nature of His dispensations in regard to the soul; for in nothing is His wisdom more displayed, than in the eternal and immutable laws, according to which the soul is regene-

rated. Now Swedenborg has shewn, from the laws of analogy, how God no more infuses into us immediately the feelings and thoughts of which we are conscious, than the sun acts immediately upon our bodies; and that were His operations, in the manner we have mentioned, direct or immediate, we should not be vivified, but consumed, since the result would be the same as if we fell into the sun. Hence, it is as necessary that there be intermediate heavens between our finite spirits and the Infinite, as it is that there be intermediate atmospheres between our bodies and the solar orb. When, therefore, God worketh in us to will and to do, he worketh in us by the ministry of his holy angels; our affections and thoughts are, consequently, so many effects, the causes of which are to be found in the spiritual world; the spiritual world being connected with the natural, as cause is connected with effect. If the cause ceases, the effect ceases; if a man, therefore, were removed from the influences of the spiritual world, the source of all feeling and thought would be intercepted. Like a member excised from the body, he would cease to live; for God is to heaven what heaven is to the soul, and what the soul is to the body. In a similar manner, to a wicked man the ministration of evil spirits is equally necessary; since, without them, he would have no power to will or to do what is evil; hence, constituted as men generally are, the influence of good and evil spirits is absolutely requisite to the existence of their being, and of their freedom in choosing and executing good or evil. It is a maxim with Swedenborg, and one the truth of which reflection will verify, that thought originates from affection; hence, that the operation of the spiritual world is mediately upon our thoughts, and immediately upon our affections. The affections, however, are those of which we are most ignorant; because they are not objects of thought, but the sources from which thought originates. Hence arises a proportionable ignorance with regard to the operations of the spiritual world, and the nature of the influences under which we act; which are often so subtle, so far removed from the sphere of our consciousness or inward discernment, that we are apt entirely to mistake their nature, or, in the language of our Savior, not "to know what manner of spirit we are of." The nature of the affections is, therefore, one grand subject of Swedenborg's philosophy; and, in proportion as a man knows these, and makes them the subject of purification, so in proportion is he in closer communion with angelic beings, and through these with the Lord. The character,

therefore, of the spiritual beings with whom man is in connection, depends entirely upon the nature of his affections, being heavenly or infernal according as his affections are holy or sinful. As his affections are ever varying, and those of the Christian ever progressing from less to more pure, so is a good man accordingly, even in this world, associated with different orders of heavenly beings, and ever passing from a lower to a higher order of angels. Similar is the law which obtains with regard to a wicked man; who, the more he confirms himself in evils of life, the deeper he sinks, even while upon earth, into the regions of infernal society. The society, therefore, which each forms to himself while in this world, is the society into which he passes when he removes into the next.

Hence Swedenborg observes, (Arcana Cœlestia, 4067,) "In order that it may be comprehended how the case is, in regard to goods and truths appertaining to man, it may be expedient to reveal what is known scarcely to any one. It is, indeed, known and acknowledged, that all good and all truth are from the Lord; and it is also acknowledged by some that there is an influx, but of such a nature as to be unknown to man; yet, whereas it is not known, at least is *not acknowledged in heart*, that about man there are spirits and angels, and that the internal man is in the midst of them, and is thus ruled by the Lord, this influx is little believed, although a belief in it is professed. There are innumerable societies in another life, which are disposed and arranged of the Lord, according to all the genera of good and truth; and societies which are in the opposite principle, according to all the genera of what is evil and false; insomuch that there is not given any genus of good and truth, nor any species of that genus, nor any specific difference, but what have such angelic societies, or to which angelic societies correspond; and, on the other hand, there is not given any genus of what is evil and false, nor any species of that genus, nor even any specific difference, which have not corresponding diabolical societies. Every man is in the society of such as to his interiors, that is, as to his thoughts and affections, although he is ignorant of it; and hence cometh all that man thinketh and willeth; so that if the societies of spirits and angels in which he is, were taken away, in that instant he would cease to have either thought or will; yea, in that instant he would fall down absolutely dead. Such is the state of man, although he believes that he hath all things from himself, and that

there is neither hell nor heaven, or, at least, that hell is far removed from him, and also heaven. Moreover, the good appertaining to man appears as somewhat simple, or as one; nevertheless, it is so manifold, and consists of such various principles, that it can in no wise be explored, even as to general principles only. The case is the same with evil appertaining to man. But such as the good is appertaining to man, such is the society of angels with which he is associated; and such as the evil is appertaining to man, such is the society of evil spirits with which he is associated. Man invites to himself such societies, or places himself in the society of such, inasmuch as like associates with like; as, for example, he who is covetous, invites to himself the societies of such as are principled in a like lust; he who loves himself in preference to others, and despiseth others, invites to himself like spirits; he who takes delight in revenge, invites such as are principled in a similar delight; and so in other cases. Such spirits communicate with hell, and man is in the midst of them, and is ruled altogether by them, insomuch that he is no longer under his own power and guidance, but under theirs; although he supposes, from the delight and consequent liberty which he enjoys, that he ruleth himself. But he who is not covetous, or who doth not love himself in preference to others, and doth not despise others, and doth not take delight in revenge, is in the society of like angels, and by them is led of the Lord; and indeed, by freedom, to every good and truth to which he suffers himself to be led; and as he suffers himself to be led to an interior and more perfect good, so he is led to interior and more perfect angelic societies. *The changes of his state are nothing else but changes of societies.* That this is the case, is evidenced to me by continual experience, which hath now been enjoyed several years; whereby the circumstance is become as familiar to me, as somewhat which man hath been accustomed to from his infancy."

Such, then, is the communion with angels, in which every true Christian lives, although he may not be gifted with any open vision of the societies with which he is surrounded; such is that inward consociation with angels, which the Church of Christ enjoys even upon earth, as we have already stated to be announced by the apostle—"Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem; and unto an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven; and

to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect," &c. &c. &c. On this subject, Swedenborg elsewhere observes, (Arc. Cœl.)

"2796. The various states which were assumed by the Humanity of the Lord, when upon earth, must needs be unknown to man; inasmuch as he never reflects on changes of states, notwithstanding such changes take place continually, both as to things intellectual or the thoughts, and as to things of the will-principle or the affections. The reason why he does not reflect on these changes, is, because he believes that all and singular the things appertaining to him, follow by natural order, and that there is no superior principle which directs them; when, nevertheless, the case is this, that all and singular the things appertaining to man are disposed by spirits and angels, and that hence come all states and changes of states, and thus they are directed by the Lord towards ends, to eternity; which ends the Lord alone foresees. That this is the case, hath been made known to me most clearly by the experience now of several years. It hath been given, also, to know and observe what spirits and angels were attendant upon me, and what states they occasioned; and this I can positively declare, that all states, even to the smallest particulars thereof, are from this source, and that they are thus directed by the Lord. It hath been also given to know and observe, that, in each particular state, there are several others which do not appear, and which, when they are together, appear as one common state; and that those states are directed and disposed to states which follow, in an orderly series. These things with man are of the Lord's operation; but with the Lord Himself, during his abode in the world, they were effected by and from Himself; because He was Divine, and the very *esse* of His Life was Jehovah. To know the changes of state as to things of the understanding and of the will in man, and in what order they follow each other, and through what series they pass, and thus how they are bended by the Lord to good as far as is possible, is angelical. The wisdom of the angels is such, that they perceive these things most minutely; and hence it is, that the things here revealed in the internal sense, concerning the changes of state with the Lord, are clearly and distinctly perceived by the angels, inasmuch as they are in the light of heaven from the Lord; and they are also, in some small degree, intelligible to the man who lives in simple good. But they are obscure, and as nothing, to those who are principled in evil,

and also to those who are in the deliriums of (their own) wisdom; for these latter have obscured and extinguished their natural and rational light by various things, which have induced darkness, howsoever they may believe themselves to be in a superior light to others."

"2886. The case with man, as to his affections and as to his thoughts, is this. No person whatsoever, whether man, spirit, or angel, can will and think from himself, but from others; nor can these others will and think from themselves, but all again from others, and so forth; and thus each from the first source or principle of life, which is the Lord. That which is unconnected doth not exist. Evil and false principles have connection with the hells; whence comes the power of willing and thinking with those who are in those principles, and also their love, affection, and delight, consequently, their freedom. But goodnesses and truths have connection with heaven; whence comes the power of willing and thinking with those who are principled therein, and also their love, affection, and delight, consequently, their freedom. Hence it may appear, what is the source of the one freedom, and of the other. That this is the real case, is perfectly well known in another life; but, at this day, it is altogether unknown in the world."

The last obstacle to which we shall here advert, as standing in the way of the reception of Swedenborg's narratives, is False Philosophy.

The particular difficulty to which we advert may, perhaps, best be illustrated by the following quotation.—After speaking of the paradisiacal objects in heaven, Swedenborg observes, (Arcana Cœlestia, 1626): "Thus John saw the New Jerusalem, which is described by him in these words: 'He carried me away in the spirit, to a great and high mountain; and shewed me that great city, the Holy Jerusalem, having a wall great and high, and having twelve gates. The building of the wall was jasper, and the city was pure gold, like unto clear glass. The foundations of the wall were adorned with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation was jasper; the second, sapphire; the third, chalcedony; the fourth, emerald; the fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, topaz; the tenth, chrysoprasus; the eleventh, jacinth; the twelfth, amethyst.' (Rev. xxi, 10, &c.)—not to mention similar descriptions by the prophets. Innumerable such objects are seen by angels and angelic spirits in clear day; and, what is wonderful, they are perceived

with all fulness of sense.* This, a person who has extinguished spiritual ideas by the terms and definitions of human philosophy, and by reasonings, can never believe, when yet it is most true: that it is true, might be evident to every one from this consideration, that such things were so frequently seen by the prophets."

Both in this passage, and in numerous others, Swedenborg refers to those whose minds are given to the abstractions of human reason, as more particularly incredulous not only of his narratives, but of others to the same effect presented to us in Scripture. Let us inquire into the reason of this; let us ascertain whether, on the supposition of a true revelation being made concerning the objects existing in another world, habits of abstraction would at all tend to make human philosophers unbelievers.

There is a something which convinces me *prima facie* that it would. The reason is, that, more particularly in regard to mind, philosophers do not so much contemplate real existences as abstractions from them. They are more conversant with ideas of qualities or properties abstracted from substances, than with ideas of substances themselves. Now, whether they are right or wrong in this particular, it is not necessary to consider; it is sufficient to say, that the very habit of abstracting qualities and properties, is apt to produce a tendency in the mind to forget substances altogether; so much so, indeed, that the mind at length finds it can do very well without them, till at last it virtually rejects them. I say, virtually rejects them; for, although it may allow that such things are, it never admits them as a legitimate subject of thought, and as much repudiates them as if they were not. The mind thus contemplating

* The subject of Swedenborg's visit to the celestial abodes, being alluded to in the Essays, as one which is of no particularly useful or practical tendency, it may be observed, that our Savior says, "In my Father's house are many mansions;" hence, as the reward of every one is according to his works, so his place of abode, or his mansion in heaven, will be more or less glorious in proportion to his degree of purity or holiness; since, according to Swedenborg, the former is the outward representative of the latter. Hence we see, how a narrative concerning the celestial abodes, may have a direct relation to principles of life and conduct. A similar observation applies to the raiment of angels, and to all other particulars connected with them; narratives of which may thus involve principles of angelic purity and holiness; and I would fain believe that, as man is, in this world, in a state of preparation for an angelic life hereafter, whatever has a relation to principles of angelic purity and holiness is in itself highly practical, and therefore ought to be considered by him to be such. The only ground upon which he could regard such principles as non-practical, is, that he had no care or concern upon the subject.

every thing as abstracted from a substance, and, in this state, being brought to reflect on itself, comes to a conclusion in accordance with its previous habits; hence mind itself is contemplated as an abstraction, a quality, an ideality, an unsubstantial something which approaches so nearly to nothing, as almost to amount to a negation of its existence. How few, for example, in the present day, think of applying the term substance to mind? Whether, in so doing, they are right or wrong, certain it is, that the very constitution of mind which they have superinduced upon themselves, must necessarily make them tend to reject any narrative which should profess to contemplate as real and substantial, that which they have been accustomed to contemplate as ideal and unsubstantial; and nothing but the passages in Scripture which seem to attribute a spiritual body, and a human form, to the spirit of man after departing from the body, could prevent them from falling into absolute unbelief with regard to the existence of the spirit of man hereafter, as a substantial human form.

Need I go farther in illustration of this remark, than the following observation made by the late Professor Stewart. Speaking of the words, substance, and essence, he remarks, "Instead of defining mind to be a thinking substance, it seems much more logically correct to define it, a thinking being. Perhaps, it would be better still to avoid, by the use of the pronoun *that*, any substantive whatever; Mind is *that* which thinks and wills,"—(Enc. Britannica, Dissertation 1, Note I, page 243.) Here the terms essence and substance, as applied to mind, are summarily discarded; the latter term being specifically mentioned in another place, (note, page 58,) as implying "a greater degree of positive knowledge concerning the nature of mind, than our faculties are fitted to attain." The spirit of man is thus left without either substance or being; nay, without spirituality, which, we are afterwards told, is not "a positive but negative idea, signifying only immateriality;" and, as it were to preclude all possibility of our knowing any thing about the soul, it is said, "The characteristical merits of Descartes' Meditations, do not consist in the novelty of the proofs contained in them of the spirituality of the soul (on which point, Descartes has added little or nothing to what had been advanced by his predecessor;) but in the clear and decisive arguments, by which they expose the absurdity of attempting to explain the mental phenomena, by analogies borrowed from those of mat-

ter." Without reference to the merits or demerits of Descartes, the sum of the argument is, that we ought not to apply the term substance to mind; that it would be better not to apply the term being; that the term spirituality conveys only a negative idea; and that no analogies from matter to mind are admissible in explaining the mental phenomena.—How forcibly do these observations remind us of the words, "*The world by wisdom knew not God;*" for be it remarked, the very same observations are applicable, nay, are actually applied, by many writers, to the Deity himself; and thus, in regard both to God and man, the one as an Infinite, the other as a finite spirit, the abstractions of human philosophy leave us equally in the dark; and philosophy, by its wisdom, knows as little of the soul, as, it is said, by its wisdom it once knew of God. Now, what does Swedenborg affirm? That a plain simple mind, believing in the Lord and in a future state, and living according to that belief, though, in other respects, ignorant and without the advantages of education, has a truer idea of the nature of the soul, of God, and of a future state, than such philosophers as we have mentioned. For the simple-minded person, when thinking of the soul or spirit, thinks of it as of a substance with a human form; and this, as Swedenborg shews, is the real fact. It is true that, in entertaining these ideas, an uneducated mind will think of form as occupying our visible space, and that he will imagine to himself something seeming to have the attributes of matter; still, if the outward image he thus conceives be only an external sign, in his natural mind, of a more inward and spiritual thought, his idea is much nearer to the truth, than that of philosophers, who contemplate the soul as having nothing analogous to matter, as being without form or substance; and who, consequently, fall into doubt and uncertainty, or, it may be, absolute unbelief, with regard to every thing relating to the soul, to the spiritual world, or to visions, as they are described in the Word of God; for it is impossible to reconcile the scriptural idea of soul and spirit, which imply body, substance, and form, with a philosophy which repudiates all. If the person believe in spite of the philosophy, well; but so far as the philosophy itself is concerned, it is not only sceptical, but infidel. Alas! well may Swedenborg call such ideas, or, rather, absence of all ideas respecting the soul,—not the progress, but the regress,—not the revival, but the perdition,—of all sound philosophy. It is an ancient proverb, that as the tree

falls, so it lies; that we go into the other world with the same character of mind, the same habits of feeling and thought, which we had acquired to ourselves in this. What is the consequence? Do we imagine that, when we have entered into the other world, and carried our sceptical habits with us, they will necessarily be removed by the evidence of the senses? Such is not the law of the human mind in our present life. Where habits of scepticism are superinduced, and confirmed, they can influence even the senses, and make a person doubt the reality of any thing he sees. Has not the system of idealism verified this fact?—a system, according to which nothing is considered as having a real, but every thing, in spite of the senses, an ideal or unsubstantial existence.

Now, where a person speaks from internal conviction, or from a conclusion to which he has arrived by the exercise of his rational powers, the conclusion to which he thus comes, is the real interior thought of his mind. If, therefore, he is taught any thing in religion contrary to this, and he says it is so, because it is a matter of faith, the article of a creed, and, therefore, that he ought to believe it; this is a mere external admission,—a truth which has no root in his mind; because, when left to himself and to his own principles, he comes either to the opposite conclusion, or to a state of doubt upon the subject. This latter is, therefore, his real creed, and not the former; this it is which is the habit of thought superinduced upon his rational faculties, not the former; these are the principles upon which his mind has been constituted, not the former; and here, therefore, we see the consequences of that species of metaphysics or philosophy, which, in regard to mind, deals only in abstractions, and rejects realities.

Why, then, have I adverted to this subject? Because the study of this kind of philosophy has had a considerable influence over the higher classes in this country; and, if I mistake not, over the minds of many divines, who, in their education, have been taught to receive these principles as genuine philosophy. What is the consequence? The very idea of a vision comes to be ridiculed; whoever professes to have seen one, is at once set down as, necessarily, a person of disordered imagination;* all sorts of

* Dr. Middleton, in his "Free Inquiry," attempts to shew the falsity of an alleged vision in the early ages of the church, on the ground, that it represented the soul in a corporeal human form.

learned hypotheses are invented to account for the phenomenon; while arguments are brought forward against the narratives of Swedenborg, which, if true, overthrow the authority of Scripture at once, and reduce all the prophets to the character of madmen, visionaries, or impostors. For, with what sort of feeling can readers turn from any book, which they are taught to believe contains true philosophy, and where the mind is treated of only as a quality, or abstract thinking principle, to another book which they are taught to believe contains no true philosophy, and where the mind is treated of as a substance and form? Surely, it is a substance and form, or it is not; if it be, there must be something radically wrong, or radically deficient, in that philosophy which excludes the idea. Suppose, however, a person reads the writings of Swedenborg under the impression, that the mind is only an abstract thinking principle, what will be his natural suggestions? That Swedenborg is considering as real, that which is unreal; that he is mistaking qualities or properties, for substances; abstractions, for actual existences; and hence, that he is giving proofs of that sort of distempered fancy, which mistakes its ideas for realities. Assuredly, if it be the mark of a distempered mind to attribute a real existence to that which has none, it is equally the mark of a distempered mind, to deprive a real existence of that, in virtue of which alone it is real. I am convinced, that one ground of prejudice against the writings of Swedenborg, is, that he considers the mind of man as a substance and form; and that, in consequence, he is led into modes of expression so different from those which are commonly adopted, that the learned of modern days consider his language either as unintelligible, or as betraying a creative fancy.

A modern physiologist observes, that we must not call the mind a substance; because, to do so, is a species of materialism? Why is it a species of materialism? Surely the materialists are they who do *not* apply the term substance to the soul, and not those who do; inasmuch as they are unable to form any other than a material idea of substance. Is it not confessed to be a fundamental doctrine of theology, that God is a substance?—that, although there are three persons, there is one substance? Is this materialism? If not, why is it materialism to call the soul a substance? Or how is it, that a Divine substance can exercise its influence upon that which is no substance? Truly, if we allow this doctrine of unsubstantiality to pre-

vail, it must lead to a direct negation of the real existence of God, and of the soul; for every man of common sense will ask, how can that be real which is unsubstantial? Must not its existence, after all, be ideal? It is against these doctrines, my Lord, that Swedenborg raises the voice of a divine philosophy. Call it speculation, theory, fancy, or what other names our opponents may please,* we cannot cease, as sincere Christians, to protest against principles, the only tendency of which is, to undermine the foundation of all true religion, and all true philosophy.

Not only, however, does Swedenborg maintain that the soul is not a mere quality, not a mere property, not an abstract thinking principle, but a distinct substance and form,—in fine, a spirit dwelling within the body; but that thought, or idea, is only a variation of that form; hence, that thought implies a thinking substance, as much as sight, or hearing, implies a seeing and hearing substance; that it is as absurd to contemplate thought as a something independent of the substance of the soul or spirit, as it is to contemplate sight or hearing as a something independent of the substance of the eye or the ear. Hence, that when a man thinks, more particularly when he thinks freely from his own affection, his thought is a variation of the form of the substance of his soul; that, if he be a good man, this form is a form of heaven, an image and likeness of God; and that the more he goes on to perfection, the more heavenly and perfect is his spiritual form, and hence his spiritual thought; that if he be a wicked man, his form is the form of hell; and the more wicked he is, the more infernal are the form and thought of his spirit. Thus we see, that in every thought there is either heaven or hell; in fine, that every thought contains within itself the whole man, however simple or uncompounded it may appear to us. Our thoughts in general, however, present to us an appearance somewhat like the motions of the hand on the face of a dial. How simple does the motion appear! Yet when we come to look within, the higher we trace the motion toward the spring, or the more interiorly we examine the machine, particularly if it be complex, the more compounded do we perceive the motion of the hands to be. Thus,

* The Oxford Tracts speak of Swedenborgianism, as a mixture of *imposture and delusion*. The observation is one, which might naturally be expected to come from a theological school, one of whose distinguishing tenets is, that as the Scripture is the *written* Word of God, so tradition is the *unwritten* Word of God.

the case is the same with regard to the human spiritual body, as with regard to the human natural, or material body. Lift only an arm, move but a finger,—what endless machinery, what a complexity of operations is requisite to produce this single motion! Analyze this motion, and we resolve it into endless particulars, which, when compounded, appear simple and uncompounded. In both cases, the less instructed is the mind, the more simple or uncompounded will the subject of examination appear.

Before concluding this part of the letter, it may be requisite to make another observation.

We commonly pray to God, that he will send us the influence of His Holy Spirit, and inspire us with holy thoughts. But what do we mean by this influence? It is well known, that it is a term to which no distinct idea is generally attached. Literally, it means *inflowing*, commonly called by Swedenborg *influx*. But if the mind and thought be an abstraction, what influx or influence* can there be into an abstraction? How can there be an *influence* into that which has no substantial existence? And if substance be considered as pertaining only to that which is material, how can that which is unsubstantial have any influence upon that which is unsubstantial? There was a time when the term influence conveyed a clear and distinct idea; when authors spoke of divine influence *into* the soul; but now that our notions have become more external, and, particularly in matters of theology, dwell more upon the outside of things, it is more convenient to speak of *influence upon* than of *influence into;* the former expression being well adapted to signify the operation of a power from without, but not the operation of a power from within; that is to say, it seems to harmonize more with the idea of what is external, than of what is internal. Thus the term influence, which once expressed a clear idea, now expresses an obscure one; and any attempt to regain the clear idea in place of the obscure one, is too often considered to be presumption. It involves, we are told, a theory. What theory? The theory that the soul is a real spiritual substance,

* Speaking of the various uses of the terms *influx* and *influence*, Stewart observes, "In all these cases there will be found, at bottom, one common idea, *the existence of some secret and mysterious connection* between two things, of which connection it is conceived to be impossible or unwise to trace what Bacon calls the *latens processus*." Dissertation I., note A A, The course of this alleged impossibility and impropriety we have already intimated.

into which the Divine Spirit flows, as The Substance of all substances.

No wonder that when such obscure ideas, as we have pointed out, are introduced into theology, the whole subject should be overclouded with darkness and mystery; and theology, like the sciences of old, become loaded with occult expressions and occult ideas, which, while it is imagined they convey a positive knowledge, because we are familiar with the terms, leave the mind precisely in the darkness in which it was before.

"It is impossible, (says Swedenborg, in one of his descriptions of the spiritual world, Arcana Cœlestia, 6053, 6054,) that any thing should be known, or even thought, respecting influx, and the commerce of the soul with the body, unless we know what the soul is, and also somewhat concerning its quality. If the soul be a thing unknown, nothing can be said concerning its influx and intercourse; for how can the communication of two parts be a subject of thought, when the mind is in total ignorance concerning the quality of one of them? That ignorance prevails as to every quality of the soul, especially in the learned world, may be manifest from this consideration, that some believe it to be a certain ethereal principle; some, a principle of flame or fire; some, a principle of pure thought; some, a principle of general vitality; some, a principle of natural activity; and a still further proof of the prevailing ignorance concerning the nature of the soul, is, that various places in the body are assigned it; some place it in the heart; some in the brain, and in the fibres there; others, in the striated bodies; others, in the ventricles; others, in the small gland; and some, in every part; but, in this case, they conceive of a vital principle, such as is common to every living thing; from which considerations it is evident, that nothing is known concerning the soul; and this is the reason why all that has been asserted on the subject, is grounded in mere conjecture. And whereas it was impossible, thus to form any idea respecting the soul, the generality of mankind could not but believe, that the soul is a mere principle of vitality, which, when the body dies, is dissipated*; and hence it is, that

* A modern physiologist, who speaks of Swedenborg as a monomaniac, instructs his pupils, by way of contrast perhaps to Swedenborgian fancies and speculations, in the following more sound and Christian principles:—"[Seeing that the brain thinks, and feels, and wills, as clearly as that the liver has the power of producing bile, and does produce it, and a salt the power of producing a certain form, and does crystallize, he leaves others at liberty to fancy an hypothesis

the learned have less belief in a life after death than the simple; and, in consequence of such unbelief, neither can they believe in those things appertaining to that life, which

of its power being a subtle, material, immortal substance (*qy. or fluid,*) exactly as they fancy life to be a subtle fluid, or perhaps, though very extraordinarily, the same subtle fluid (if subtlety is immateriality and immortality;) elucidating the subject no more than in the case of life, and equally increasing the number of its difficulties; as though we were not *created* beings, or not altogether ignorant what matter is, or of what it is capable and incapable; as though matter exhibited nothing but extension, impenetrability, attraction, and inertness; and as though an Almighty could not, if it seemed good to him, have endowed it, as he most evidently has, with the superaddition of life, and even of feeling and will.... The physical inquirer, finding the mind a power of the brain, and abstaining from hypothesis, must conclude that, in the present order of things, when the brain ceases to live, the power necessarily ceases; that, in the language of Scripture, dust we are, and unto dust we all return; that our being is utterly extinguished, and we go back to the insensibility of the earth whence we were taken. Our consciousness of personality can afford no reason for imagining ourselves immortal and distinct from earth, more than brutes; for this the fly possesses equally with the philosopher, about whose head it buzzes."—All the arguments in proof of the immortality of the soul, as deduced from the moral government of God, the improveableness of our characters, &c., he very summarily dismisses, as partly originating in a desire to explain every thing. He says, that at death we are utterly extinct; but, nevertheless, that we are required, as Christians, to believe in the resurrection, which is a miracle, and, as such, is contrary to the real order of things. That it is then our *bodies* that rise, for that the Christian doctrine teaches the resurrection of, what we obviously are, bodies, that is, material bodies, endowed with the superaddition of life, feeling, and will.—Such is the sound philosophy which this author substitutes for the speculations of Swedenborg; in support of which, he calls to his aid the lucubrations of Bishop Law, Bishop Watson, Locke, and other eminent writers. Here, then, we have an illustration of the following comment of Swedenborg on the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Arc. Cœl. 196. "The sensual man, or he who believes only his senses, denies the existence of spirit, because he does not see it. 'It is nothing,' says he, 'because I am not sensible of it. What I see and touch, that I am persuaded has existence.' The scientific man, or he who forms his conclusions from the sciences, says within himself, 'What is spirit but a casual vapor, or heat, or some other thing (which he denominates by some term appertaining to science,) and which vanishes as soon as such vapor, heat, &c. is extinguished? Have not other animals their bodies, senses, and something analogous to reason? and yet we pronounce them to be mortal, and the spirit of man to be immortal!' Thus he reasons himself into a denial of the existence of a spirit. In like manner, philosophical men, who wish to have more discernment than others, speak of spirit in terms which they themselves are unacquainted with; as is evident from their disputing about them, contending that not a single expression is applicable to spirit which is at all grounded in any thing material, organical, or extended; thus they remove it from their ideas in such a manner, that it entirely vanishes in respect to them, and becomes—*a mere nothing*. Nevertheless, the wiser sort of these philosophers assert spirit to be a thinking principle; but, in their reasonings about this thinking principle, in consequence of separating it from the idea of substantiality, they at length conclude that it must needs vanish when the body dies. Thus, all who ground their reasonings in mere sensual, scientific, and philosophical principles, deny the existence of spirit, and, *in so doing, they become altogether incredulous as to whatever is asserted in relation to spirit and spiritual things*. Not so the simple in heart; if they are questioned concerning the existence of spirit, they declare their unfeigned belief therein, be-

are the celestial and spiritual things of faith and love. This is also evident from the Lord's words in Matthew: 'Thou hast hid these things from the wise and intelligent, and hast revealed them unto infants,' (xi, 25.) And again, 'seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand,' (xiii, 13;) for the simple think no such thing concerning the soul, but believe that they shall live after death; in which simple faith, lies concealed, although they are not aware of it, a belief that they shall live there as men, shall see angels, shall discourse with them, and enjoy happiness.

"As to what concerns the soul, of which it is said that it shall live after death, it is nothing else but the man himself,

cause the Lord hath said that they should continue to live after death. Thus they do not extinguish their rational principle, but cause it to live by the Word of the Lord."

Arc. Cœl. 10,099. "Most of the learned, at this day, have no other idea concerning things successive, than as what is continuous, or, what coheres by continuity. In consequence of having this idea concerning the succession of things, they cannot conceive what is the discrimination between the exteriors and interiors of man, consequently, neither between the body and the spirit of man; wherefore, when they think of those things from those ideas, they cannot at all understand that the spirit of man, after the dissipation or death of the body, can live under a human form.—But things successive are not connected continuously, but discretely; that is, distinctly according to degrees; for inferior things are altogether distinct from exterior, insomuch that exterior things may be separated, whilst interior things still continue in their life. Hence it is, that man can he withdrawn from the body and think in his spirit; or, according to a form of speaking in use amongst the ancients, can be withdrawn from things sensual, and elevated towards things interior. The ancients, also, knew, that when man is withdrawn from the sensual things which are of the body, he is withdrawn or elevated into the light of his spirit, thus into the light of heaven. Hence, likewise, the learned ancients knew, that when the body was dissipated they should live an interior life, which they called their spirit: and, whereas they regarded that life as the very human life itself, they thence also knew that they should live under a human form. Such was the idea which they had concerning the soul of man; and since that life was in affinity with life divine, they hence perceived that their soul was immortal; for they knew that that part of man which was in affinity with life divine, and thus conjoined to it, cannot in any wise die. But this idea concerning the soul and concerning the spirit of man, after those ancient times, disappeared; by reason, as was said above, of the want of a just idea of things successive. Hence, also, it is, that they who think from modern erudition, do not know that there is a spiritual principle, and that this is distinct from what is natural; for they who have an idea of things successive as of what is continuous, cannot conceive of what is spiritual any otherwise than as of somewhat more purely natural; when yet they are distinct from each other, like what is prior and what is posterior, thus, as that which begets and that which is begotten; hence it is, that by persons of such erudition the discrimination is not apprehended between the internal or spiritual man, and between the external or natural; thus neither between man's internal thought and will, and his external thought and will. Hence, also, they are unable to comprehend any thing concerning faith and love, concerning heaven and hell, and concerning the life of man after death."

who lives in the body, that is the interior man, who by the body acts in the world, and who gives to the body to live; this man, when he is loosed from the body, is called a spirit, and appears in this case altogether in a human form; yet cannot in any wise be seen by the eyes of the body, but by the eyes of the spirit; and before the eyes of the latter appears as a man in the world, hath senses, viz. of touch, of smell, of hearing, of seeing, much more exquisite than in the world; hath appetites, cupidities, desires, affections, loves, such as in the world, but in a more excellent degree; thinks also as in the world, but more perfectly; discourses with others; in a word, he is there as in the world, insomuch that, if he doth not reflect upon the circumstance of his being in the other life, he knows no other than that he is in the world, which I have occasionally heard from spirits; for the life after death is a continuation of the life in the world. This, then, is the soul of man which lives after death. But, lest the idea should fall upon somewhat unknown by using the term soul, in consequence of the conjectures and hypotheses concerning it, it is better to say the spirit of man, or, if you prefer it, the interior man; for it appears there altogether as a man, with all the members and organs that man hath, and it is also the real man himself in the body. That this is the case, may also be manifest from the angels seen, as recorded in the Word, who were all seen in the human form; for all the angels in heaven have a human form, because the Lord hath, who after his resurrection appeared so often as a man. The ground and reason why an angel and the spirit of a man is a man in form, is, because the universal heaven from the Lord hath (a tendency) to conspire to a human form, whence the universal heaven is called the greatest created human form; and whereas the Lord lives in every individual in heaven, and by influx from the universal heaven acts upon every individual, therefore every angel is an image thereof, that is, a form most perfectly human; as, in like manner, is man after death."

Thus have we presented a very general outline of Swedenborg's ideas, in regard to the soul or spirit of man, which is here done for two reasons; first, because the disbelief that the soul is a substance and form, is often the ground of disbelief in Swedenborg's alleged revelations; for how can any one who believes the soul to be extinguished at death, and that, independently of the body, it has neither form nor substance, give credit to a narrative which

treats of the soul as possessing both, and living, immediately after its separation from the body, in a higher exercise of its powers than it did before? The second reason for which this general outline is furnished, is, because it is proposed to add a few brief remarks upon the subject of analogy; and it would have been useless to speak of any relations between two things, of one of which we are wholly ignorant; it being but empty sound to speak of analogy between that which has substance and form, and that which has neither; or between two things, of one of which we are wholly ignorant.

As, I am sorry to say, there is no little tendency, in some classes of the Christian community, to treat the subject of analogy, as explained by Swedenborg, either with unconcern or ridicule, perhaps I cannot better introduce the few remarks which are intended to be made upon it, than by the following quotation from the work of an author,* who was an ornament to the Church of England.

"God made the universe and all the creatures contained therein, as so many glasses wherein he might reflect his own glory. He hath copied forth Himself in the creation; and, in this outward world, we may read the lovely characters of the Divine goodness, power, and wisdom. In some creatures, there are darker representations of God, there are the prints and footsteps of God; but in others, there are clearer and fuller representations of the Divinity, the face and image of God; according to that known saying of the schoolmen, *Remotiores similitudines creaturæ ad Deum dicuntur vestigium; propinquiores vero imago.* But how to find God here, and feelingly to converse with Him, and, being affected with the sense of the Divine glory shining out upon the creation, how to pass out of the sensible world into the intellectual, is not so effectually taught by that philosophy which professed it most, as by true religion. That which knits and unites God and the soul together, can best teach it how to ascend and descend upon those golden links, that unite, as it were, the world to God. That Divine wisdom that contrived and beautified this glorious structure, can best explain her own art, and carry up the soul back again, in these reflected beams, to Him who is the fountain of them. Though good men all of them are not acquainted with all those philosophical notions, touching the

* Select Discourses, Chap. 8, by John Smith, Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge.

relation between the created and the uncreated being; yet, may they easily find every creature pointing out to that Being whose image and superscription it bears, and climb up from those darker resemblances of the Divine wisdom and goodness, shining out in different degrees upon several creatures, ὥσπερ ἀναβάθμοις τισὶ as the ancients speak; till they sweetly repose themselves in the bosom of the Divinity: and, while they are thus conversing with this lower world, and are viewing '*the invisible things of God in the things that are made*' in this visible and outward creation,—they find God many times secretly flowing into their souls, and leading them silently out of the court of the temple into the holy place. But it is otherwise with wicked men. They dwell perpetually upon the dark side of the creatures, and converse with these things only in a gross, sensual, earthly, and unspiritual manner. They are so encompassed with the thick and foggy mist of their own corruptions, that they cannot see God there, where he is most visible—'*The light shineth in darkness, but darkness comprehendeth it not;*' their souls are so deeply sunk into that house of clay which they carry about with them, that, were there nothing of body or bulky matter before them, they could find nothing to exercise themselves about.

"But religion, where it is in truth and in power, renews the very spirit of our minds; and doth in a manner spiritualize this outward creation to us; and doth, in a more excellent way, perform that which the Peripatetics are wont to affirm of their *intellectus agens*, in purging bodily and material things from the feculency and dregs of matter, and separating them from those circumstantiating and straitening conditions of time and place, and the like; and teaches the soul to look at those perfections which it finds here below, not so much as the perfections of this or that body, as they adorn this or that particular being, but as they are so many rays issuing forth from that first and essential perfection, in which they all meet and embrace one another in the most close friendship. Every particular good is a blossom of the first goodness; every created excellency is a beam descending from the Father of lights: and should we separate all these particularities from God, all affection spent upon them would be unchaste, and their embraces adulterous. We should love all things in God, and God in all things; because He is All in All, the Beginning and Original of being, the Perfect Idea of their goodness, and The End of their motion. It is nothing but a

thick mist of pride and self-love, that hinders men's eyes from beholding that sun which both enlightens them, and all things else. But when true religion begins once to dawn upon men's souls, and, with its shining light, chases away their black night of ignorance, then they behold themselves and all things else, enlightened, though in a different way, by one and the same Sun; and all the powers of their souls fall down before God, and ascribe all glory to Him. Now it is, that a good man is no more solicitous whether this or that good thing be mine, or whether any perfections exceed the measure of this or that particular creature; for whatsoever good he beholds any where, he enjoys and delights in it, as much as if it were his own; and whatever he beholds in himself, he looks not upon it as his property, but as a common good; for all these beams come from one and the same fountain and ocean of light, in whom he loves them all with a universal love. When his affections run along the stream of any created excellences, whether his own or any one's else, yet they stay not here, but run on till they fall into the ocean; they do not settle into a fond love and admiration, either of himself or any other's excellences; but he owns them as so many pure effusions and emanations from God; and, in a particular being, loves the universal goodness. *Si sciretur à me veritas, sciretur etiam me illud non esse, aut illud non esse meum, nec à me.*

"Thus may a good man walk up and down the world, as in a garden of spices, and suck a divine sweetness out of every flower. There is a two-fold meaning in every creature, as the Jews speak of their law, a literal and a mystical; and the one is but the ground of the other: and, as they say of divers pieces of their law, so a good man says of every thing that his senses offer to him, '*It speaks to his lower part, but it points out something above to his mind and spirit.*' It is the drowsy and muddy spirit of superstition, which, being lulled asleep in the lap of worldly delights, is fain to set some idol at its elbow; something that may joy it, and put it in mind of God. Whereas, true religion never finds itself out of the infinite sphere of the Divinity; and wherever it finds beauty, harmony, goodness, love, ingenuity, wisdom, holiness, justice, and the like, it is ready to say, Here and there is God. Wheresoever any such perfections shine out, a holy mind climbs up by these sunbeams, and raises itself up to God.

"And seeing God hath never thrown the world from Himself, but runs through all created essence, containing

the archetypal ideas of all things in Himself, and from thence deriving and imparting several prints of beauty and excellency all the world over; a soul that is truly godlike, a mind that is enlightened from the same fountain, and hath its inward senses affected with the sweet relishes of Divine goodness, cannot but every where behold itself in the midst of that glorious unbounded Being, who is indivisibly every where. A good man finds every place he treads upon holy ground; to him the world is God's temple; he is ready to say with Jacob, '*How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God.*'

"It was a dangerous and unworthy spirit in that philosophy, which first separated and made such distances between metaphysical truths and the truths of nature; whereas, the first and most ancient wisdom amongst the heathens, was indeed a philosophical divinity or a divine philosophy, which continued for divers ages; but as men grew worse, their queasy stomachs began to loathe it, which made the truly wise Socrates complain of the sophisters of that age, who began now to corrupt and debase it; whereas, heretofore the spirit of philosophy was more generous and divine, and did more purify and ennoble the souls of men, commending intellectual things to them, and taking them off from settling upon sensible and material things here below, and still exciting them to endeavor after the nearest resemblance of God, the Supreme Goodness and Loveliness, and an intimate conjunction with Him, which, according to the strain of that philosophy, was the true happiness of immortal souls."

Such are the views of creation which were once taken by a good man, and which are more fully and clearly unfolded by Swedenborg; but which, I am sorry to say, in these days, are apt to be treated with unconcern or contempt, even by some who would desire to be thought both learned and pious. There can be no doubt that this excellent man, like others before him, was aware of the existence, and, in some measure, of the nature of the true principles of analogy; although, like others of the same school, he saw them but darkly. It was, I believe, reserved for Swedenborg to place the truth of these principles in a clear light, and to establish them upon a solid basis. I will therefore briefly advert to the doctrine of Swedenborg upon this subject; although I fear that, in so doing, I may not do justice to his views.

An examination into the subject will convince every im-

partial mind, that there are few things in theology upon which more confusion of idea has prevailed, than upon the subject of analogy and metaphor; one being constantly mistaken for the other. This confusion exists, notwithstanding the distinction drawn by the reflecting few, that metaphor is addressed to the imagination, and analogy to the reason; that the former suggests a similitude cognizable by the senses, the latter a relation apprehensible only to the reason; hence, that in metaphor there is an imagined similitude; in analogy, a real relation. In proportion as the mind is uneducated, metaphor will naturally be chosen instead of analogy, nay, the two will be confounded; and hence well meaning persons, unacquainted with science, and of uncultivated reason, in consequence of having adopted metaphorical interpretations of Scripture, and mistaken them for analogical, have been a principal cause in bringing spiritual interpretations into disrepute. Such interpretations, however, are not spiritual; they are merely sensual and imaginary. The true spiritual interpretation of Scripture is founded upon analogy, the relations of which are real; whereas, those of metaphor are often only apparent, artificial, or arbitrary. This is one reason for which spiritual interpretations have frequently been supposed, even by the learned, who have not always remembered the distinctions between analogy and metaphor, to be *necessarily* vague, uncertain, and fanciful.

Now, however just may be the definition of analogy to which we have alluded, it is a definition of analogy in its secondary, not in its primary sense. Analogy implies, we admit, in either sense, a real relation; but in its primary sense, a relation not between one natural thing and another natural thing, but between a natural thing and a spiritual thing, such as the relation of the spirit to the body, or of the spiritual world to the natural. The relation of analogy, therefore, when considered in its strict signification, is not the relation of one natural effect to another, of one natural cause to another, and so forth; but the relation of a natural effect to its spiritual cause, or of the spiritual cause to its natural effect; thus, the relation of a *prior* principle to a *posterior*, of a higher to a lower, or *vice versa*. The order of analogy is thus the order presented to us in the processes of creation, generation, or production. It is by analogy, in its primary sense, that we interpret the Word of God, and the visible creation in relation to that Word; and by analogy, in its secondary sense, that we interpret the phenomena of visible nature. The foundation of this distinc-

tion rests upon the principle, that the natural world, with all its secondary causes, is but a world of effects, the spiritual world alone being the world of causes; hence the analogy of the natural world to the spiritual is that of effect to cause; whereas, all analogies between one natural thing and another are analogies between one natural effect and another; hence analogy in its secondary, not in its primary sense. If, in natural things, the principles of analogy are the foundation of science, so are they, in regard to spiritual things, or, in their higher sense, the foundation of all real theological knowledge. If, in the former case, they are certain and immutable, much more so are they in the latter; for the certainty of the former is derived from the certainty of the latter; hence nothing is so certain and immutable as interpretations of the Word of God founded upon this principle. To attempt to shake them, is to attempt to shake the fabric and constitution of the universe.

How is it, then, that analogy in its primary sense has been almost so universally known? The answer is obvious. Where analogies exist in the natural world, the relations are cognizable by the natural reason, and our senses seldom fail to communicate to the mind some external idea of the objects; but where analogies are to be traced between natural and spiritual things, merely natural reason, however assisted by the senses, can apprehend only one side of the analogy; for a spiritual mind only can apprehend spiritual things. In that mind only can they be realized, and, until they are realized, neither can the object be known, nor its relations traced; for how can the relation between two things be traced, of the nature, or even existence, of one of which we know nothing? Even in natural things, the attempt to trace it would be almost impossible; although in cases in which we are ignorant of one of the objects, we may sometimes form a distant and dark idea of it, by means of certain other assignable relations; but in spiritual matters, unless a man be truly spiritual, his mind is either a perfect blank, or a living perversion and contradiction of the principles which the existence of analogy implies. Why, therefore, should we wonder at the ridicule cast upon Swedenborg's analogical interpretations of Scripture, or their alleged incomprehensibility? The wonder would be, if, constituted as the mind is, the fact were otherwise; for the natural mind, as such, cannot be analogical to itself: there cannot be an analogy between one thing. Hence, if a person's mind be merely natural, however learned it may be, it is but one object, or

but one side of the analogy, that is presented; and if it be in evil, it involves a negation and contradiction of the other side; for the spiritual mind he does not possess; consequently, he has only one thing between which to trace an analogy, that is to say, in the sense in which we have defined it, he is not aware of any analogy at all; indeed, there is no analogy, but rather a contradiction of it, between the spiritual mind and the unregenerate natural mind; consequently, such a person will, nay, must, deny its existence; while, on the other hand, he will admit of the existence of analogy in its secondary sense, because here the natural mind is in its element, being employed only in tracing the relations between natural things; hence, in this case, if a man be intellectually disposed, he will pursue analogies in their secondary sense, or, if he be more the creature of the senses, he will betake himself to mere metaphor.

Analogy, in its primary sense, as existing between a natural and a spiritual object, thus between a spiritual end or cause and a natural effect, extends to all the relations between them; hence, in this case, we are not at liberty to single out some relations between the objects as analogical, and to reject others; there being nothing in the end but what is in some relation of analogy to the cause, nor in the cause, but what is in some relation of analogy to the effect. When, therefore, authors affirm that we must not pursue an analogy too far, they are, almost invariably, upon the principles we are now explaining, not pursuing any analogy at all. Indeed, what they call a spiritual idea, is, generally, not a spiritual idea, but only a natural idea of a spiritual thing, the relations between which are not those of end, cause and effect; for were they such, the two could not be more or less related to each other; for the end cannot be more or less related to the cause, nor the cause to the effect, since the relations between them are universal.

In illustration of these principles I would observe, that "By the Word were all things made, and without Him was not any thing made that was made." Here the Great First Cause is the Word or the Creator, the effect being the creature or creation; hence the relation of creation* to

* For a fuller explanation of the application of the principle of analogy to the interpretation of the Word of God, the reader is referred to the writings of Swedenborg; he will also find the subject largely dwelt upon in a work entitled the "Plenary Inspiration of the Scriptures," by the Rev. S. Noble. I mention this more particularly, because I have said nothing here upon the subject of representatives and significatives, but have only touched very briefly on the general principles of analogy.

the Word is a relation of effect to cause, of a natural object to its spiritual origin; that is to say, it is the relation of a primary analogy. Thus all creation, so far as it is in divine order, is a glass or mirror, wherein we may behold the creating Word, the various objects which compose creation corresponding with the various truths which constitute the Word; so that between every object of creation, and every corresponding spiritual idea or truth, there is a relation of end, cause, and effect, the end being in the cause, and the cause in the effect; the object itself thus existing by, and from, that which it symbolizes.

Thus Swedenborg observes, (Arcana Cœlestia, 2920,) "It is known, or may be known, that there is a spiritual world, and that there is a natural world. The spiritual world, in its universal sense, is the world where spirits and angels dwell; and the natural world is that where men dwell. In a particular sense, there is a spiritual world and a natural world appertaining to every individual man; his internal man being to him a spiritual world; but his external, being to him a natural world. The things which flow in out of the spiritual world and are presented in the natural, are, in general, representations; and, so far as they agree together, they are correspondences."—2991. "That natural things represent spiritual, and that they correspond together, may also be known from this consideration, that what is natural cannot possibly have existence, except from a cause prior to itself. This cause is of spiritual origin, and there is nothing natural which doth not thence derive the cause of its existence. Natural forms are effects, nor can they appear as causes, still less as causes of causes, or principles; but they receive their forms according to their use, in the place where they are. Still, however, the forms of effects represent the things appertaining to their causes; yea, these latter things represent those which appertain to their principles. Thus all natural things represent the things appertaining to the spiritual, to which they correspond; and spiritual things also represent the things appertaining to the celestial, from which they are derived."—2993. "In the vegetable kingdom, there is not the smallest thing existing which doth not represent somewhat in the spiritual world, and correspond thereto, as hath been frequently given me to know by like commerce with the angels; the reason whereof was also explained to me, and shown to be this, viz: that the causes of all things natural are grounded in things spiritual, and the principles of those causes, in things celes-

tial; or, what is the same thing, that all things which are in the natural world, derive their cause from truth which is spiritual, and their principle from good which is celestial; and that natural things proceed thence according to all the differences of truth and of good, which are in the Lord's kingdom; consequently, from the Lord himself, who is the source of all good and truth. These things must needs appear strange to many, and especially to those who cannot, or will not, ascend in thought beyond nature; and who do not know what is meant by what is spiritual, and therefore do not acknowledge it."—2994. "Man, also, during his life in the body, is capable of feeling and perceiving very little of all this; for the celestial and spiritual things appertaining to him, fall into the natural things which are in his external man, and there he loses the sensation and perception of them. The representatives and correspondences which are in his external man, also, are such, that they do not appear like unto the things in the internal man to which they correspond, and which they represent; therefore neither can they come to his knowledge, before he puts off those external things. Blessed, at that time, is he who is in correspondence, that is, whose external man corresponds to the internal."—2998. "Man is almost in total ignorance about correspondence; neither does he believe that he has any such connection with the spiritual world; when yet the truth is, that all his connection is thence, and without such connection, neither himself, nor any part of him, could possibly subsist a moment; for thence is derived all his subsistence, &c."—3000. "Hence it is, that all and singular the things contained in the universe, represent the Lord's kingdom; insomuch that the universe with its heavenly constellations, with its atmospheres, and with its three kingdoms, is nothing else but a kind of theatre representative of the Lord's glory, which is in the heavens. In the animal kingdom, not only man, but also each particular animal, even the least and vilest, are thus representative. For instance, in the case of worms, which creep on the ground and feed on the leaves of plants; these, when the time of their nuptials approaches, immediately becomes chrysallises, and presently are furnished with wings, and thereby are elevated from the ground into the atmosphere; which is their heaven, where they enjoy their delights and their freedom; sporting one with another, and feeding on the choicest parts of flowers; laying their eggs, and thus providing for posterity; and on this occasion, in consequence of being in the

state of their heaven, they are also in the fulness of their beauty. That these things are representative of the Lord's kingdom, may be obvious to every one."

Such are the views of Swedenborg, so far as I am able to exhibit them, with regard to the general principles of analogy, or correspondence.

Since, then, the relation of analogy is a real relation, and is that principle according to which the natural object is created and made to subsist, it follows, that a complete knowledge of analogy supposes also a complete knowledge of the principles of natural things, or of the sciences in general. Hence, also, we see how it is, that man cannot have a key to the real interpretation of the Word of God, without also having the key to the real interpretation of the works of God; and, consequently, that the knowledge of the true principles of the interpretation of Scripture, was reserved for the age in which the true principles should be known of the interpretation of nature.

To what end, then, are all the discoveries which are daily made in the different sciences? To this end,—that the natural mind of man may be supplied with genuine natural truths, by means of which it may be rendered capable of being brought into correspondence with an enlightened spiritual mind. The mode by which this spiritual mind is formed, and the natural mind brought into full correspondence with it, is no other than the mode by which man's regeneration is effected, and by which he is rendered a spiritual-natural man,—a work, which, as we have before stated, forms the leading subject of the revelations of Swedenborg. For when the natural mind is void and empty, by reason of ignorance, it has no ideas in which spiritual truths can be represented; and a spiritual truth without a natural basis, appears to the mind as unreal, consequently, as a mere—nothing; besides which, the natural mind, in its unregenerated state, is so loaded with fallacies, that there can be no correspondence between it and a spiritual mind; consequently, there can be no influence or influx of the spiritual mind into the natural, and hence, within man, of the heavenly world into the earthly; there being rather within him an entire negation or perversion of all spiritual things. When, however, the spiritual mind is formed within, and the natural is brought into correspondence with it, then it is demonstrable, both from the Word of God and from the principles we have been explaining, that there may be an influx from the spiritual world or angelic heaven

into man's natural mind, nay, into the very region of his perceptions; that nothing but a special act of Divine Providence can withhold it; and that, in this case, the miraculous exercise of power is not in opening the spiritual world, but in closing it.

Such, my Lord, is the true explanation of the principle of Swedenborg's alleged intercourse with the spiritual world. Being, from his earliest years, of an humble and pious disposition; a spiritual mind having been formed within him; his natural mind, which, by the Divine blessing, had been sufficiently guided into the true principles of science and philosophy, was capable of being brought into such a correspondence with the laws of the heavenly kingdom, that there could be an influx from the latter into the former,* and hence, an intercourse between one and the other. This is the state in which, as Swedenborg shews, man was created to live. This was his first and natural state; his present darkness being his last and unnatural state; his spirit being as truly designed to commune with heaven within, as his body, with the natural world without. Thus, when the Word of God has filled the internal man with spiritual truths, when the natural mind is filled with natural truths, and when, by the process of regeneration, the natural is brought into correspondence with the spiritual, the whole man becomes regenerated, the image and likeness of God, a heaven in its least form, a temple of Divine light and love; and he is a living fulfilment of that prophecy of old, "Behold! the tabernacle of God is with men; and he will dwell with them; and they shall be his people; and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

I am quite aware that these views may be misunderstood: allow me, therefore, to enter into a farther explanation of them.

Revelation from the spiritual world to the mind of man, may be of two kinds; revelation by inward perception, and revelation by open vision. The former supplies us with an internal evidence; the latter, with an external; the former cannot interfere with the exercise of man's volun-

* I am here speaking of that intercourse with heaven which is the result of the regenerate life, because this is the main point to be considered. Swedenborg's intercourse with the spiritual world, which probably was, in some respects, designed to be peculiar to him, it is not necessary more particularly to consider. When the former is granted, there will be no difficulty with regard to the latter.

tary powers; the latter, without the former, may. The former, or inward perception, so far from interfering with the exercise of the voluntary powers, implies their highest exercise. For it is a perception of good, that it is good, and of truth, that it is truth; and this, by reason of the conformity of the nature of the person, to the good and truth which are presented to him. If such an one, therefore, has open vision, it is rather a consequence of his inward perceptions, or of that purity of heart by which he is enabled to see God. This is the kind of revelation which the writings of Swedenborg explain as the highest. Hence, my Lord, we have no desire to be dealers in dreams and visions, in the way in which it is sometimes supposed. We would aim rather at an enlightened conscience, or that singleness of eye by which our whole body is filled with light. Swedenborg has shewn, how a man is not reformed by external visions, and may be no better for seeing them. For though he may see them, he may not understand them, and so be no wiser than he was before. Indeed, the mere seeing of external visions, where the person is possessed of no inward perception, no more supposes him to be wiser and better than others, than does any other extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit. Nay, Swedenborg assigns the best of reasons for which, constituted as the mind in general is, external intercourse with the other world might be highly pernicious. For the spirits which attend a man, he says, are such as are in agreement with his affections and thoughts; hence, did he openly converse with them, they would only confirm him in his existing state of mind, and add their testimony to the truth of all his falses, and the good of all his evils; enthusiasts would thus be confirmed in their enthusiasm, and fanatics, in their fanaticism. Were the mind, however, purified from its evils and falses, the case would be altogether otherwise; because, then, being in association with holy angels, the exercise of its voluntary powers would not be interfered with; man would learn what is good and true from an inward perception of its nature; in which case, open vision, if it existed, would not be the cause, but the consequence, of his state of life; and whatever might be the symbolical scenes then presented to him, they would be perfectly intelligible, from an inward principle of perception.

Hence, in the Arcana Cœlestia, 5121, Swedenborg observes, "In regard to revelations being either from perception, or from discourse with the angels through whom

the Lord speaks, it is to be noted, that they who are in good and thence in truth, especially they who are in the good of love to the Lord, have revelation from perception; whereas, they who are not in good and thence in truth, may, indeed, have revelations, yet not from perception, but by a living voice heard in them; thus by angels, from the Lord. This latter revelation is external, but the former internal. The angels, especially the celestial, have revelation from perception; as also the men of the most ancient church had, and some also of the ancient church, but scarcely any one at this day; whereas, very many have had revelations from discourse without perception, even who have not been principled in good; in like manner, by visions or by dreams. Such were most of the revelations of the prophets in the Jewish church; they heard a voice, they saw a vision, and they dreamed a dream; but, inasmuch as they had no perception, they were revelations merely verbal or visual, without a perception of what they signified; for genuine perception exists through heaven from the Lord, and affects the intellectual principle spiritually, and leads it perceptibly to think as the thing really is, with an internal assent, the source of which it is ignorant of. The intellectual principle supposes that this internal assent is in itself, and that it flows from the connection of things; whereas, it is a dictate through heaven from the Lord, flowing into the interiors of the thought, concerning such things as are above the natural and sensual principle, that is, concerning such things as are of the spiritual world, or of heaven. From these considerations, it may be manifest what is meant by revelation from perception."

In accordance with this view, the author of the Select Discourses observes, (chap. vii, page 459,) "There is an inward sense in man's soul, which, were it once awakened and excited with an inward taste and relish of the Divinity, could better define God to him, than all the world else. It is the sincere Christian, that so tastes and sees how good and sweet the Lord is, as none else does. The God of hope fills him with all joy and peace in believing; so that he abounds in hope, as the apostle speaks. He quietly reposes himself in God; his heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord; he is more for a solid peace, and settled calm of spirit, than for high raptures and feelings of joy, or extraordinary manifestations of God to him; he does not passionately desire, nor importunately expect, such things; he rather looks after the manifestations of the goodness and

power of God within him, in subduing all in his soul that is unlike and contrary to God, and forming him into his image and likeness."—"Should a man hear a voice from heaven, or see a vision of the Almighty, to testify unto him the love of God towards him; yet, methinks, it were more desirable to find a revelation of all from within, arising up from the bottom and centre of a man's own soul, in the real and internal impressions of a godlike nature upon his own spirit; and thus to find the foundation and beginning of heaven and happiness within himself."

Such, then, is a general outline of Swedenborg's views with regard to Intercourse with the Spiritual World; and I think it may fairly be said, that any one will have a very great difficulty to prove them to be fanatical and visionary, without including in the same condemnation the views which have been taken by some of the most learned, pious, and judicious members of the church; nay, without involving in the sentence, the very principles of Christianity itself.

Before dismissing the subject, it may be well to advert to an observation made by Archdeacon Paley; and, as it is one which is not unfrequently advanced by others, and cannot be better expressed than in the author's own words, I may be allowed, perhaps, to quote it at length. "The human understanding," says he, "constituted as it is, though fitted for the purposes for which we want it, that is, though capable of receiving the instruction and knowledge which are necessary for our conduct and the discharge of our duty, has a native original incapacity for the reception of any distinct knowledge of our future condition. The reason is, that all our conceptions and ideas are drawn from experience (not perhaps all immediately from experience, but experience lies at the bottom of them all;) and no language, no information, no instruction, can do more for us, than teach us the relation of the ideas which we have. Therefore, so far as we can judge, no words whatever that could have been used, no account or description that could have been written down, would have been able to convey to us a conception of our future state, constituted as our understandings now are. I am far from saying, that it was not in the power of God, by immediate inspiration, to have struck light and ideas into our minds, of which naturally we have no conception. *I am far from saying, that he could not, by an act of his power, have assumed a human being, or the soul of a human being, into heaven; and have shewn to him, or it, the nature and the glories of that kingdom; but it is*

evident that, unless the whole order of our present world be changed, such revelations as these must be rare; must be limited to very extraordinary persons, and very extraordinary occasions. And even then, with respect to others, it is to be observed, that the ordinary modes of communication by speech or writing, are inadequate to the transmitting of any knowledge or information of this sort; and from a cause which has already been noticed, namely, that language deals only with the ideas we have; that these ideas are all founded in experience; that probably, most probably indeed, the things of the next world are very remote from any experience which we have in this; the consequence of which is, that though the inspired person might himself possess this supernatural knowledge, he could not impart it to any person not in like manner inspired. When, therefore, the nature and constitution of the human understanding is considered, it can excite no surprise, it ought to excite no complaint, it is no fair objection to Christianity, 'that it doth not yet appear what we shall be.' I do not say, that the imperfection of our understanding forbids it (for, in strictness of speech, that is not imperfect which answers the purpose designed by it;) but the present constitution of our understanding forbids it."*

The Learned Author may, to a certain extent, be right, in affirming that the present constitution of our understanding forbids it; for, as Swedenborg has shewn, the present age, not excepting the learned, has sunk into a grave of merely natural and sensual ideas,† and the human under-

* Sermons, page 165, State after Death.

† Indeed, so obstinate has this tendency to naturalism become, that a modern author has been nothing loth to make the following statement. "It was plainly the intention of nature, *that our thoughts should be habitually directed to things external;* and, accordingly, the bulk of mankind are not only indisposed to study the intellectual phenomena, but are incapable of that degree of reflection which is necessary for their examination. Hence it is that, when we begin to analyze our own internal constitution, we find the facts it presents to us, so very intimately combined in our conceptions with the qualities of matter, that it is impossible for us to draw distinctly and steadily the line between them; and that when mind and matter are concerned in the same result, *the former is entirely overlooked, or is regarded only as an accessary principle dependant for its existence on the latter.* To the same cause it is owing, that we find it so difficult, if it be at all practicable, to form an idea of any of our intellectual operations, abstracted from the images suggested by their metaphorical names." (Dugald Stewart, First Dissertation.) This tendency to naturalism, and the want of knowing the true principles of analogy, are, as we have pointed out, among the cases which create the difficulty here alluded to; a difficulty which cannot be removed from among the learned, until its causes be removed. I will only add that, if the difficulty has become so great in regard to the natural mind,

standing has only followed the fallacies which these ideas present; while, in the few instances in which those fallacies are renounced, the mind is left in confessed darkness upon the most important theological subjects. It is acknowledged, that man is born in evil, that he grows up a mere creature of the senses; but, surely may we not see in this very fact, the cause of the native incapacity of which Paley speaks? May we not, in this, see the reason for which it is perfectly true, that the mind must be reconstituted before man can arrive, from experience, at any just idea of spiritual things?* For, as long as he continues the merely natural man, must not all his philosophy consist in forming merely natural ideas and tracing their relations? Of the relation of natural ideas to spiritual, indeed, he can know nothing, since it is perfectly true, that of spiritual things he can form no conception, because he has no experience; and no language, no information, no instruction, can do more for him than teach him the relation of the ideas which he has. Hence, as the learned author observes, there is an absolute necessity for the reconstitution of his mind, before it can form a just, or even any, conception of spiritual things; for, until then, all that is written upon the subject will appear to him to have little or no intelligible reference to his practice, and to furnish only abundant matter of faith and food for curiosity. Now this reconstitution of the mind is no other than its regeneration—the regeneration of its will, and the regeneration of its understanding; and, had any pretended prophet revealed to us the mysteries of heaven, without having, at the same time, communicated a method for this reconstitution of the mind, however true might be the knowledge communicated, it would be useless, and incomprehensible. Yet, some how or other, when the real merits of Swedenborg's writings are discussed, his visions are sure to be singled out, and the very thing, nay, the only thing, which could enable us to comprehend them, is almost as sure to be omitted. It is the non-attendance to this subject, that makes the revelations of Swedenborg appear to be non-practical; that totally deprives them of all that internal evidence which they would otherwise have; and, in default of which, the reader considers himself as called upon to

what must it be in regard to the spiritual mind? What must become of theology, when studied by minds of such a caste? Is it not sufficient to justify all that Swedenborg has declared with regard to the fulfilment of the prophecy, that "*darkness has covered the earth, and gross darkness the people*" ?

believe in the author, solely upon the author's own testimony.

Whatever may have been the nature of Swedenborg's distempered fancy, certain it is, that we are not to look for this distemper primarily in his visions, but in the philosophy which led to them. Here is the origin of the evil, if it be one. The fanaticism, if it be such, is not primarily in the visions, but in the philosophy; and our opponents must take up the question on this ground, if they will take it up on the only ground upon which it can be decided. Thousands who have been misled by the popular views of Swedenborg's pretensions, have been obliged to confess their error, when they have come seriously to consider and understand his principles. To compare his revelations with those of Mahomed, or with all the idle stories we read of in the Roman church, is but trifling with the subject; and can have no sort of influence, except upon those who live, to say the least of it, in the innocence of their own ignorance; while it can occasion only surprise and regret in the more sober-minded and reflecting. Now we have already seen how it is, that the Divine Being has been thought to be necessarily so very different from any conceptions we can form of Him, that, know what we may of Him, we, after all, know nothing. It is from the operation of the same cause, that persons think it impossible to arrive at any just ideas of the spiritual world. They imagine it to be so far removed from any experience we possess in the present life, that it is absolutely impossible to arrive at any true conceptions with regard to it. To a certain extent they are right; the same difficulties which lie in the way of a right knowledge of God, lie in the way of a right knowledge of the spiritual world, more particularly of heaven. Man, having become merely natural, can, in this merely natural state, form no just idea of those principles of analogy to which we have adverted. By the reconstitution of the mind, however, as explained by Swedenborg, he is enabled to originate thoughts in accordance with these principles. This reconstitution is an immense change, and indeed one that is endless. The possibility of the commencement of such a change, at some period or other in the history of the world, it does not appear that Paley denied, nay, rather, it seems he was inclined to believe; for, as he observes in another place, "This doctrine of the progressive increase and final completeness of our Lord's kingdom, is also virtually laid down in this passage from the

Corinthians, 'He must reign till he hath put all enemies under his feet.' For that this subjection of His several enemies will be successive, one after another, is strongly intimated by the expression, 'the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.' Now, to apprehend the probability of these things coming to pass, or, rather, to remove any opinion of their improbability, we ought constantly to bear in our mind this momentous truth, that, in the hands of the Deity, time is nothing; that he has eternity to act in. *The Christian dispensation, nay, the world itself, may be in its infancy. A more perfect display of the power of Christ and of his religion may be in reserve;* and the ages which it may endure, after the obstacles and impediments to its reception are removed, may be, beyond comparison, longer than those which we have seen; in which it has been struggling with great difficulties, most especially with ignorance and prejudice." Sermons, Agency of Christ, p. 332.

My Lord, it is to this new order of things, that we believe the writings of Swedenborg are calculated to conduce; and, to this purpose, that he has achieved what no other person has, *the Christianization of science.* Revealed religion and science may be separated in the human mind, but they are not separated in the mind of God. Nature and the Bible, when rightly interpreted, will be found to be one. The work of God will be found to be the language of the Word of God; natural theology to be the same as revealed, when natural theology shall itself have been revealed. On the same Creator, Nature and the Bible discourse with each other,—on the glories of the same Jehovah, deep calleth unto deep.

Allow me, then, to ask, Is all expectation of the moral renovation of the world vain and visionary?* Is that knowledge of the Divine operations, by which we are enabled to avail ourselves of divine power in the regeneration of the soul, a knowledge which ministers only to speculative curiosity? If reason and experience shew that it is not; if, at the same time, it be "the obvious policy of an impostor, and the most natural delusion of a visionary, to treat much of curious and hidden matters, beyond what is conducive to practical instruction;" do not such objections demonstrate, upon their own principles, that Swedenborg is neither an impostor nor a visionary? that his principles bear all the marks of a true revelation? that, so far as the

*The reader is again referred to the Lectures by a Country Pastor, in which the probability of some moral renovation seems to be admitted.

arguments in the Essays are concerned, the writings of Swedenborg may be true; that the kingdom of God may have come upon us, nay, probably, has come upon us? It is of no use merely to assert, that Swedenborg's writings are only the day-dreams of a distempered fancy. They must be proved to be such, by far better arguments than any which have been yet adduced. Until this be done, may we not call upon the wise virgins to give proof that they have not slept? or, that slumbering, they have not been the dreamers? that what is real, has not been to them as what is unreal? that they have not mistaken their day-dreams for realities? Most certainly, as far as any of the arguments against Swedenborg are concerned, it may be, that not he, but the church, has been the dreamer; that it has not known the time of its visitation. If this be the case, it is no more than what many rational and sober-minded persons have themselves been inclined to presume; and who have never been considered, on that account, to have necessarily had a tendency to enthusiasm.

When we reflect, how even eminent authors, in their zeal to defend the authority of Scripture, have explained away its principles of inspiration; and accounted, as far as possible, upon natural principles, for the supernatural intercourse of the prophets with the spiritual world, we cannot be surprised at the opinions which have been passed upon the alleged visions of Swedenborg. It is unfortunate, however, that authors in general seem to possess no test of what is, or what is not, a true vision; that, so far as internal evidence is concerned, they are wholly at a loss to determine whether even the visions recorded in Scripture are true. As tradition is the principle upon which the Canon of Scripture is received, so tradition seems to be the only principle upon which the Divine origin of the scriptural visions is recognized, The plain and most straight-forward mode, however, of deciding the question, is, to point out the test of a true vision; and, by its application, to demonstrate that the visions of Scripture are genuine, and those of Swedenborg spurious, and, consequently, of the same class with the pretended visions of Mahomed, and of the various enthusiasts in the Roman Church. Why do not our worthy opponents attempt this? If they have no test of a true vision, why do they not acknowledge it? As far as the principles of analogy can be applied to the explanation of the visions of Scripture, they are equally applicable to the corresponding visions of Swedenborg. Indeed, it is obvious to

any person who attentively examines the subject, that the visions of Scripture, concerning the objects in heaven, are written precisely upon the same principles upon which the corresponding visions of Swedenborg are written; and that we cannot destroy the credit of one, without equally destroying the credit of the other. To assert that Mahomed's visions are written upon this principle, is to assert what the best authors who have written upon this subject have denied; and to plead in their behalf such a scriptural character as I cannot think the distinguished author of the Essays intended. They are generally admitted to be addressed only to the natural senses, and are quite incapable of any explanation upon the principles of correspondence explained by Swedenborg.*

Besides, when I reflect on the profound truths of religion and philosophy, which are intermixed with Swedenborg's visions, I cannot but call to mind the following passage in a work previously quoted, I mean the Select Discourses, by Mr. Smith. The author, speaking of enthusiastic impostors who pretended to revelation, observes, Chap. 4, "This delusion ariseth from hence, that all this foreign force that is upon them, serves only to invigorate and impregnate their fancies and imaginations, but does not inform their reasons, nor elevate them to a true understanding of things in their coherence and contexture, and therefore they can so easily embrace things absurd to all true and sober reason; whereas, the prophetical spirit, acting principally upon the reason and understanding of the prophets, guided them consistently and intelligibly into the understanding of things." Now, although I do not believe that this principle is applicable to the prophets in Scripture, because it does not appear that their understanding was always opened when their spiritual vision was opened, still, if the principle be acknowledged as the test of the highest prophetic spirit, we are willing to submit the revelations of Swedenborg to this proof. That

* With regard to the visions of paradise described by Mahomed, Mr. Sale observes, in his Preliminary Discourse, affixed to the Koran, Sect. 4, "Had Mahomed, after all, intimated to his followers that what he had told them of paradise was to be taken, not literally, but in a metaphorical sense (as it is said the Magians do the description of Zoroaster,) this might perhaps make some atonement; *but the contrary is so evident from the whole tenor of the Koran*, that although some Mahomedans, whose understandings are too refined to admit such gross conceptions, look on their prophet's description as parabolical, and are willing to receive them in an allegorical or spiritual acceptation, yet *the general and orthodox doctrine is, that the whole is to be strictly believed in the obvious and literal acceptation*," *&c.*

some of his visions may, to the reason of some persons, appear absurd, we do not deny; all that we ask is, if they are to be rejected upon this principle, why are those in Scripture to be retained? We commonly call a thing ridiculous or absurd, if it creates in us feelings of the absurd or ridiculous; but what can more completely demonstrate the absurdity of our own principles, than to judge of the truth of a narrative upon this ground? It is making our feelings the test of truth. The essential character and the succession of spiritual ideas are not the same with those which are merely natural; consequently, if, to the words which express them, we attach the ideas of the merely natural man, the less understood the narrative is, the more absurd will it appear. Sober reason may convince us of the fact. But if men will abandon their reason, and give way to their feelings; if, in this state, they undertake to judge of what they neither know, nor can know any thing about, the conclusion to which they come is but the answer they receive according to their folly. Suppose a person should ridicule the narrative of St. John, with regard to the New Jerusalem, because he made the city as high as it was long, who does not see that the merely natural man may be ridiculing his own ideas, but not those of Scripture? For the words of Scripture were never meant to convey the views which he ridicules. Smile as he may, therefore, he is only smiling at himself; being a standing witness of his own folly, in supposing that he could have any knowledge of spiritual things, in his own natural state.

That there have been numbers of vain, delusive fancies afloat in the world; that warm, enthusiastic imaginations have been forward to mistake the strong impressions produced upon them for real existences, who can doubt? But, as one extreme is apt to give rise to another, may we not presume that one principal cause of these delusions has been the apathy, unconcern, nay, practical unbelief, in regard to the awful verities of another world, which we find prevailing in the Christian community? What if there have been enthusiasts, fanatics, and impostors? What if they have gone about with "Thus saith the Lord" in their mouths, when the Lord hath not spoken? If all warnings are to be rejected simply because some are untrue, why should we listen to established pastors and teachers; since some among them have been ignorant, some unsound in doctrine, and some have handled the word of God deceit-

fully?* Far be it from us to ask persons to receive the writings of Swedenborg, merely to make large demands upon their faith or credulity. We appeal to an enlightened reason; we appeal to the principles of that internal evidence, which our opponents have never yet been able to gainsay; we invite them to bring all their faculties to bear upon the subject, all their learning, all their sagacity, all their judgment; and when they have done this, let them not be disappointed, if all these should be found of no avail without an humble and a contrite heart. In vain is it said, that the subjects are such, that any inquiry into them presupposes a spirit of presumption, and that men must be content to live in their present ignorance and darkness. We have reason to be thankful, that many are not so unconcerned about their state hereafter. We live in days in which many, if they cannot form right conceptions of heaven and hell, will form to themselves wrong ones, rather than form none at all; and if they form wrong ideas, is it of no practical utility to point them out? If the kingdom of heaven is to be established within us; if man himself is designed to be a heaven, is it ministering to mere curiosity, is it indulging a blind credulity, is it conveying a useless non-practical instruction, to inculcate right ideas of its nature? Surely to affirm as much, would be to affirm, that to instruct a man in that which he ought to be, which he was intended to be, and for which alone he was brought into the world, is but wasting the time of the teacher and the taught in unprofitable questions. When men have fallen into delusions with regard to heaven and hell, when those delusions pass for genuine truth, is it unworthy of the mercy of the Lord to discover these errors by a revelation of the nature of the two worlds? For heaven is good and truth, and hell is evil and the false; and to reveal the nature of heaven and hell, is but to reveal the nature of good and truth, evil and error. The evidence, therefore, on which we are invited to receive the revelations of Swedenborg, with regard to heaven and hell, is an internal evidence; it is that of our moral sense of the nature of good and evil. Now is not this the highest evidence upon which it is possible for us to receive any truth whatever? Mathematical demonstrations are addressed only to the lower powers of reason, but this addresses itself to our whole

* See the Preface to Swedenborg's Treatise on Heaven and Hell, by the Rev. W. Hartley.

being; nevertheless, we are capable of attaining to this evidence, only in the degree in which we perceive and love that which is good, and hate that which is evil.

If then, as Christians, our moral sense of good and evil be derived only from the Word of God; if we so interpret that Word, as to derive from it entirely new principles of life and conduct; if this new interpretation form the principal revelation of Swedenborg; and if all his narratives, with regard to heaven and hell, be founded on the principles of good and evil, truth and error, as taught in the Word of God thus interpreted, can any thing be plainer than that, so far from its being difficult to point out in what respect Swedenborg's pretended revelations require any alteration in our conduct, motives, or moral sentiments, the difficulty lies entirely the other way? And if so, what can be more clear than that the whole of the argument in the Essays, as applied to the writings of Swedenborg, is founded upon an entire misapprehension of the nature of his principles?

(Heaven and Hell—page 4.) "The man of the church," says Swedenborg, "hath scarcely any knowledge respecting heaven and hell, or respecting his life after death, although they all stand plainly described in the Word; yea, many also who are born within the church, deny those things, saying in their hearts, Who hath ever come thence to give us information? Lest, therefore, such a negative principle, which prevails especially amongst those who have acquired much worldly wisdom, should also infect and corrupt the simple in heart, and the simple in faith, it hath been given me to have consort with the angels, and to discourse with them as a man with a man, and also to see the things which are in the heavens, likewise those which are in the hells....thus now to describe them from what hath been heard and seen, in the hope that, by these means, ignorance may be enlightened and incredulity dissipated."—Can we then suppose, that such a revelation, if made, would be in accordance with our imaginations? When God hath told us, that "it hath not entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which he hath laid up for them that love him," shall we reject a revelation professedly coming from Him, because it does not conform to our previous conceptions? Shall we confess, that we are in utter darkness upon the subject; and when a professed revelation comes, at once reject it, with a confidence which would beseem only those, who

were previously well informed upon the matter? Shall we not rather presume that, if such a revelation were made, the probability would be, that it would contain things at first incredible, and incomprehensible? Look even to the natural world,—how slow of heart are we to believe all that is written in the great volume of Nature! Born as we are, with inherent evils, prejudices, and passions; brought up within a narrow and confined circle; instructed but partially in the ways of God, how many are there, whose minds can see nothing beyond the limits of their own narrow sphere! how few whose souls are adequate to the greatness and grandeur even of the visible creation! However far reason may travel, she is lost and confounded at the immensity which, even in the natural world, still lies before her. "We have here attained," says a modern astronomer, (Discourse on Natural Philosophy, by Sir J. Herschell, art. 312,) "a point in science, where the human intellect is compelled to acknowledge its weakness, and to feel that no conception the wildest imagination can form will bear the least comparison with the intrinsic greatness of the subject." If this be the case in natural things, how much more is it the case in spiritual things! Oh! foolish, and slow of heart to believe all that the Creator hath written in the great volume of nature; Oh! far more slow of heart, to believe all that He hath written in the great volume of revelation! "If I have told you of earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things?"

With these observations, my Lord, permit me now to bring this Letter to a close; and to assure Your Grace that, in many respects, it has been a very unwelcome undertaking; unwelcome, because the author feels a reluctance to place himself in opposition to one, whose works have often afforded him profit and delight; and whose learning, attainments, Christian moderation, and enlightened views on many subjects, cannot but command his respect and admiration; unwelcome, also, because the author is deeply sensible of his own incompetency to do justice to the cause he advocates; and feels much more satisfied in correcting his own imperfections, than in pointing out those of others. Whatever may be the errors discoverable in this Letter, he sincerely trusts that they who differ from him, may consider them as possibly errors in the author, and not necessarily in the cause he advocates. As he never desires to take advantage of any mere inadvertencies committed by

others, so he trusts he may, in return, receive from them the same favorable consideration. He writes not for mere critics; but for those whom the Spirit of truth may enable to view the subject in all its comprehensive relations, without confining the sphere of their vision to whatever little cavil it may be in their power to raise; for those, in fine, who can say, with Your Grace, "I have learned to call no man master upon earth; and to appeal to nothing but the records of inspiration, and the force of just reasoning."

The author of this Letter cannot conclude, without soliciting, also, indulgence from the receivers of Swedenborg's principles; for he is aware, that there are many who are more conversant with the writings of Swedenborg than himself; who could more correctly express the views of that author; and more successfully answer objections against them. He cannot, however, but observe, that, however successful in controversy the principles of Swedenborg may be, this is not the real sphere of their utility. To test their real value, their power must be tried in the regeneration of the soul; here, it is that their truth is evidenced; here, that they manifest themselves in all the glory of their divine original; here, that fact speaks, and not argument, as it is written, "These signs shall follow them that believe: in my name shall they cast out devils, they shall speak with new tongues, they shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover." Thus has the receiver of these principles the witness of the Spirit within, the witness of his own heart, of a reformed, regenerated nature; so that, whatever may be the arguments adduced against us,—"*we know* that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." This love of God and of our neighbor, is that by which we know that we are of the truth, and assure our hearts before Him.

The cause here advocated, will never be established by the noise of mere controversy.—Its progress must be slow; as slow as the moral regeneration of the world. We seek not, therefore, to swell our numbers by proselytes; though we consider it to be our bounden duty, at every seasonable opportunity, to make known those principles we so highly esteem, and to afford others the happiness they are calculated to confer. May we ever hold out to all the hand of Christian fellowship; and esteem those, who are not outwardly with us, but who have been inwardly taught of

God, as more truly members of the New Jerusalem, than such as are receivers of its doctrines, and are elated, instead of humbled, by their knowledge. We have no fear of the final success of these principles; and, whatever be our portion, whether of evil report or good report, we desire to hold on the even tenor of our way; knowing that the time is at hand, when the Truth, like a rock, will emerge above all the clouds of darkness and prejudice with which it is surrounded; and mankind will behold it with the sunshine of eternal glory settled on its head. With these convictions, we would desire ever to remember the words of the apostle, (St. James, chap. v, ver. 7,) "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold! the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and the latter rain. Be ye also patient; establish your hearts, for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

With a profound veneration of the high and holy office to which Your Grace is called, and with an earnest prayer that Your Grace may long be preserved to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior,

Believe me,

Most respectfully,

Your Grace's humble Servant,

AUGUSTUS CLISSOLD.

APPENDIX.

TRINITY.

It has been usual to confine the subject of the Trinity principally to the learned. In the present Appendix we shall view it principally in relation to the unlearned. The learned are the few; the unlearned, the many. The scholar, if presumed to teach Tritheistical notions, may plead the difference between essence and modes of subsistence. The illiterate person has no such resort. We begin with the learned; we then pass to the unlearned. The journey commences with the Dawn, continues to the Dusk, and ends with the Midnight.

The Dawn.

"*The watchman said, The morning cometh.*" (Isa. xxi, 12.)

*"PERSON, in its ordinary use at present, invariably implies a numerically distinct substance. Each man is one Person, and can be but one. It has also a peculiar theological sense, in which we speak of the 'three Persons of the blessed Trinity.' It was probably thus employed by our Divines as a literal, or perhaps etymological, rendering of the Latin word 'Persona.' I am inclined to think, however, from the language of Wallis (the mathematician and logician) in the following extract, as well as from that of some other of our older writers, that the English word Person was formerly not so strictly confined, as now, to the sense it bears in common conversation among us.

*Extracted from the Elements of Logic, by Archbishop Whately. Article PERSON.

"'That which makes these expressions' (viz. respecting the Trinity,) 'seem harsh to some of these men, is, because they have used themselves to fancy that notion only of the word Person, according to which three men are accounted to be three persons, and these three persons to be three men. But he may consider that there is another notion of the word Person, and in common use, too, wherein the same man may be said to sustain divers persons, and those persons to be the same man; that is, the same man, as sustaining divers capacities. As was said but now of Tully, *Tres Personas Unus sustineo; meam, adversarii, judicis.* And then it will seem no more harsh to say, The three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are One God, than to say, God the Creator, God the Redeemer, and God the Sanctifier, are one God. . . . . it is much the same thing whether of the two forms we use.'—*Letters on the Trinity*, p. 63.

"'The word Person (*persona*) is originally a Latin word, and doth not properly signify a *Man* (so that *another person* must needs imply *another man;*) for then the word *Homo* would have served, and they needed not have taken in the word *persona*, but rather one *so circumstantiated.* And the *same Man*, if considered in other circumstances (considerably different) is reputed *another person.* And that this is the true notion of the word Person, appears by those noted phrases, *personam induere, personam deponere, personam agere*, and many the like,' in approved Latin authors. Thus the same man may at once sustain the person of *King* and a *Father*, if he be invested both with *regal* and *paternal* authority. Now, because the King and the Father are, for the most part, not only different persons, but different men also (and the like in other cases,) hence it comes to pass, that *another Person* is sometimes supposed to imply *another man;* but not always, nor is that the proper sense of the word. It is Englished in our dictionaries by the *state, quality*, or *condition whereby one man differs from another;* and so, as the condition alters, the Person alters, though the man be the same.

"'The hinge of the controversy is, that notion concerning the *three somewhats*, which the Fathers (who first used it) did intend to design by the name Person; so that we are not from the word *Person* to determine what was that *Notion*, but from that Notion which they would express, to determine in what sense the word Person is here used,' &c. &c.—*Letter V, in answer to the Arian's Vindication.*

"What was precisely the notion which these Latin Fathers intended to convey, and how far it approached the classical signification of the word 'Persona,' it may not be easy to determine. But we must presume that they did not intend to employ it in what is, now, the ordinary sense of the word Person; both because 'Persona' never, I believe, bore that sense in pure Latinity, and also because it is evident that, in that sense, 'three divine Persons' would have been exactly equivalent to 'three Gods;' a meaning which the orthodox always disavowed.

"It is probable that they had nearly the same view with which the Greek theologians adopted the word Hypostasis; which seems calculated to express 'that which stands under (*i. e.* is the Subject of) Attributes.' They meant, it may be presumed, to guard against the suspicion of teaching, on the one hand, that there are three Gods, or three Parts of the one God; or, on the other hand, that Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are no more than three names, all, of the same signification; and they employed, accordingly, a term which might serve to denote, that (though divine Attributes belong to all and each of these, yet) there are attributes of each, respectively, which are not so strictly applicable to either of the others, as such; as when, for instance, the Son is called especially the 'Redeemer,' and the Holy Spirit, the 'Comforter or Paraclete,' &c. The notion thus conveyed is indeed very *faint*, and *imperfect;* but is perhaps, for that very reason, (considering what Man is, and what God is,) the less likely to lead to error. One may convey to a blind man, a notion of seeing, correct as far as it goes, and instructive to him, though very imperfect: if he form a more full and *distinct* notion of it, his ideas will inevitably be *incorrect.*—*See* Essay VII, § 5, Second Series.

"It is perhaps to be regretted that our Divines, in rendering the Latin 'Persona,' used the word Person, whose ordinary sense, in the present day at least, differs in a most important point from the theological sense, and yet is not so remote from it as to preclude all mistake and perplexity. If 'Hypostasis,' or any other completely foreign term, had been used instead, no idea at all would have been conveyed, except that of the explanation given; and thus the danger at least of being misled by a word would have been avoided.

"Our Reformers however did not introduce the word into their Catechism, though it has been (I must think injudiciously) employed in some popular expositions of the Catechism, without any explanation, or even allusion, to its being used in a peculiar sense.

"As it is, the danger of being not merely *not* understood, but *mis*understood, should be guarded against most sedulously, by all who wish not only to keep clear of error, but to inculcate important truth; by seldom or never employing this ambiguous word without some explanation or caution. For if we employ, without any such care, terms which we must be sensible are likely to mislead, at least the unlearned and the unthinking, we cannot stand acquitted on the plea of not having directly inculcated error.

"I am persuaded that much heresy, and some infidelity, may be traced, in part, to the neglect of this caution. It is not wonderful that some should be led to renounce a doctrine which, through the ambiguity in question, may be represented to them as involving a self-contradiction, or as leading to Tritheism; that others should insensibly slide into this very error; or that many more (which I know to be no uncommon case) should, for fear of that error, deliberately, and on principle, keep the doctrine of the Trinity out of their thoughts, as a point of speculative belief to which they have assented once for all, but which they find it dangerous to

dwell on; though it is, in fact, the very Faith into which, by our Lord's appointment, we are baptized.

"Nor should those who do understand, or at least have once understood, the ambiguity in question, rest satisfied that they are thenceforward safe from all danger in that quarter. It should be remembered that the thoughts are habitually influenced, through the force of association, by the recurrence of the ordinary sense of any word to the mind of those who are not especially on their guard against it. *See* 'Fallacies,' § 5.

"The correctness of a *formal* and *deliberate Confession* of Faith, is not always, of itself, a sufficient safeguard against error in the *habitual impressions* on the mind. The Romanists flatter themselves that they are safe from Idolatry, because they distinctly acknowledge the truth, that 'God only is to be *served;*' *viz.* with 'Latria;' though they allow ADORATION, ('hyperdulia' and 'dulia') to the Virgin and other Saints,—to Images,—and to Relics: to which it has been justly replied, that, supposing this distinction correct in itself, it would be, in practice, nugatory; since the mass of the people must soon (as experience proves) lose sight of it entirely in their habitual devotions.

"Nor, again, is the habitual acknowledgment of *One* God, of itself a sufficient safeguard; since, from the additional ambiguities of 'One' and 'Unity,' (noticed in the preceding Article,) we may gradually fall into the notion of a merely *figurative* Unity; such as unity of substance merely, (see the preceding Article)—Unity of purpose,—concert of action, &c. such as is often denoted by the phrase of 'one mind.' *See* 'SAME' in this Appendix, and 'Dissertation,' Book IV, Chap. v.

"When, however, I speak of the necessity of *explanations*, the reader is requested to keep in mind that I mean, not explanations of the *nature of the Deity*, but of our *own use of words*. On the one hand, we must not content ourselves with merely saying that the whole subject is mysterious, and must not be too nicely pried into; while we neglect to notice the distinction between divine revelations, and human explanations of them; between inquiries into the mysteries of the Divine nature, and into the mysteries arising from the ambiguities of language, and of a language, too, adopted by uninspired men. For, whatever Scripture declares, the Christian is bound to receive implicitly, however unable to understand it; but to claim an uninquiring assent to expressions of man's framing (however judiciously framed) without even an attempt to ascertain their meaning, is to fall into one of the worst errors of the Romanists.

"On the other hand, to require explanations of what God is in Himself, is to attempt what is beyond the reach of the human faculties, and foreign from the apparent design of Scripture revelation; which seems to be chiefly, if not wholly, to declare to us (at least to insist on among the essential articles of faith) with a view to our practical benefit, and to the influencing of our feelings and conduct, not so much the intrinsic nature of the Deity, as what he is relatively to us. Scripture teaches us (and our Church Cate-

chism directs our attention to these points) to 'believe in God, who, as the Father, *hath made* us and all the world,—as the Son, *hath redeemed* us and all mankind,—as the Holy Ghost, *sanctifieth* us, and all the elect people of God.' And this distinction is, as I have said, pointed out in the very form of Baptism. Nothing, indeed, can be more decidedly *established* by Scripture,—nothing more *indistinctly explained* (except as far as relates to us) than the doctrine of the Trinity; nor are we perhaps capable, with our present faculties, of comprehending it more fully.

"In these matters our inquiry, at least our first inquiry, should always be, what is *revealed:* nor if any one refuses to adopt, as an article of faith, this or that exposition, should he be understood as necessarily maintaining its *falsity*. For we are sure that there must be many truths relative to the Deity, which we have no means of ascertaining: nor does it follow that even every truth which *can* be ascertained, must be a part of the essential faith of a Christian.

"And as it is wise to reserve for mature age, such instructions as are unsuitable to a puerile understanding, so, it seems the part of a like wisdom, to abstain, during this our state of childhood, from curious speculations on subjects in which even the ablest of human minds can but 'see by means of a glass, darkly.' On these, the Learned can have no advantage over others; though we are apt to forget that any mysterious point inscrutable to Man, as Man,—surpassing the utmost reach of human intellect,—must be such to the learned and to the ignorant, to the wise and to the simple alike;—that in utter darkness, the strongest sight, and the weakest, are on a level. 'Sir, in these matters,' (said one of the most eminent of our Reformers, respecting another mysterious point,) 'I am so fearful, that I dare speak no further, yea, almost none otherwise, than as the Scripture doth as it were *lead me by the hand*.'

"And, surely, it is much better thus to *consult* Scripture, and to take it for a *guide*, than to resort to it merely for *confirmations*, contained in detached texts, of the several parts of some System of Theology which the student fixes on as reputed orthodox, and which is, in fact, made the guide which he permits to 'lead him by the hand;' while passages culled out from various parts of the Sacred Writings, in subserviency to such system, are formed into what may be called an *anagram* of Scripture; and then, by reference to this system as a standard, each doctrine or discourse is readily pronounced Orthodox, or Socinian, or Arian, or Sabellian, or Nestorian, &c.; and all this on the ground that the theological scheme which the student has adopted is supported by Scripture. The *materials* indeed are the stones of the Temple, but the *building* constructed with them is a fabric of human contrivance. If, instead of this too common procedure, students would fairly search the Scriptures, with a view not merely to *defend* their opinions, but to *form* them,—not merely for *arguments*, but for *truth*,—keeping human expositions to their own proper purposes, [See Essay VI, First Series,] and not allowing these to become, practically, a

standard; if, in short, they were as honestly desirous to be *on the side of Scripture*, as they naturally are to have *Scripture on their side*, how much sounder, as well as more charitable, would their conclusions often be!

"With presumptuous speculations, such as I have alluded to, many theologians, even of those who live near, and indeed during the apostolical times, seem to have been alike chargeable, widely as they differed in respect of the particular explanations adopted by each:

"'Unus utrique
Error; sed variis illudit partibus.'

And it is important to remember, what we are very liable to lose sight of, the circumstance, that not only there arose grievous errors during the time of the apostles, and, consequently, such were likely to exist in the times immediately following, but also that, when these *inspired* guides were removed, there was no longer the same infallible authority to decide what *was* error. In the absence of such a guide, some errors might be received as orthodox, and some sound doctrines be condemned as heterodox.

"The Gnostics introduced a theory of Æons, or successive emanations from the divine 'Pleroma' or Fulness; one of whom was Christ, and became incarnate in the man Jesus. The Sabellians are reported to have described Christ as bearing the same relation to the Father, as the illuminating (φωτιστικὸν) quality does to the Sun; while the Holy Ghost corresponded to the warming quality (θαλπὸν:) or, again, the Three, as corresponding to the Body, Soul, and Spirit of a man; or, again, to Substance,—Thought or Reason,—and Will or Action. The Arians again appear to have introduced in reality three Gods; the Son and the Holy Spirit, created Beings, but with a certain imparted divinity. The Nestorians and Eutychians, gave opposite, but equally fanciful and equally presumptuous, explanations of the Incarnation, &c. &c.

"Nor were those who were accounted orthodox, altogether exempt from the same fault of presumptuous speculation. 'Who,' says Chrysostom, 'was he to whom God said, Let us make man? who but he. . . . . the Son of God?' And Epiphanius, on the same passage, says, 'this is the language of God to his Word.' Each of these writers, it may be observed, in representing *God* (under *that* title) as addressing Himself to the Son as a distinct Being previously to the birth of Jesus on earth, approaches very closely to the Arian tritheism. And Justin Martyr, in a similar tone, expressly speaks of God as 'One, not in *number*, but in judgment or designs.' I will not say that such passages as these may not be so interpreted as to exclude both the Arian and every other form of tritheism; but it is a dangerous thing, to use (and that not in the heat of declamation, but in a professed *exposition*) language of such a nature that it is a mere chance whether it may not lead into the most unscriptural errors. If the early writers had not been habitually very incautious in this point, that could hardly have taken place which is recorded respecting the council

held at Rimini, (A. D. 360,) in which a Confession of Faith was agreed upon, which the Arians soon after boasted of as sanctioning their doctrine, and 'the Church,' we are told, 'was astonished to find itself unexpectedly become Arian.'

"The fact is, that numberless writers, both of those who were, and who were not, accounted heretics, being displeased, and justly, with one another's explanations of the mode of existence of the Deity, instead of taking warning aright from the errors of their neighbors, sought, each, the remedy, in some *other* explanation instead, concerning matters unrevealed and inexplicable by man. They found nothing to satisfy a metaphysical curiosity in the brief and *indistinct*, though decisive, declarations of Scripture, that 'God was in Christ, reconciling the World unto himself;' that 'in Him dwelleth all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily;' that 'it is God that worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure;' that if we 'keep Christ's saying, He dwelleth in us, and we in Him;' that 'if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his;' and that 'the Lord is the Spirit,' &c. They wanted something more full and more philosophical than all this; and their theology, accordingly, was 'spoiled through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.' Hostile as they were to each other, the grand mistake in principle was common to many of all parties.

"And in later ages the Schoolmen kept up the same spirit, and even transmitted it to Protestants. 'Theology teaches,' (says a passage in a Protestant work) 'that there is in God, one Essence, two Processions, three Persons, four Relations, five Notions, and the Circumincession, which the Greeks call Perichoresis.'..... What follows is still more to my purpose; but I cannot bring myself to transcribe any further. 'Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?'

"But the substance of great part of what I have been saying, has been expressed in better language than mine, in a late work which displays no ordinary ability, Mr. Douglas's *Errors Regarding Religion*.

"'The Radical mistake in all these systems, whether heretical or orthodox, which have embroiled mankind in so many scandalous disputes, and absurd and pernicious opinions, proceeds from the disposition, so natural in man, of being wise above what is written. They are not satisfied with believing a plain declaration of the Savior, "I and the Father are one." They undertake, with the utmost presumption and folly, to explain in what manner the Father and the Son are one; but man might as well attempt to take up the ocean in the hollow of his hand, as endeavor, by his narrow understanding, to comprehend the manner of the Divine existence.'—P. 50.

"'Heresies, however, are not confined to the heterodox. While the Arians and Semi-Arians were corrupting the truth by every subtilty of argument and ingenious perversion of terms, the orthodox all the while were dogmatizing about the Divine nature, with

a profusion of words which either had no meaning, or were gross mistakes, or inapplicable metaphors, when applied to the infinite and spiritual existence of God. And, not content with using such arguments against the heretics as generally produced a new heresy without refuting the former one, as soon as they obtained the power they expelled them from the Roman empire, and sent them with all the zeal which persecution confers, and which the orthodox, from their prosperity, had lost, to spread every variety of error amongst the nations of the barbarians.

" ' Orthodoxy has become a very nice affair, from the rigor of its terms, and the perplexity of its creed, and very unlike the highway for the simple which the Gospel presents. A slip in a single expression was enough to make a man a heretic. The use or omission of a single word occasioned a new rent in Christianity. Every heresy produced a new creed, and every creed a new heresy. . . . . Never does human folly and learned ignorance appear in a more disgusting point of view, than in these disputes of Christians among themselves; nor does any study appear so well calculated to foster infidelity as the history of Christian sects, unless the reader be guided by light from above, and carefully distinguish the doctrines of the Bible from the miserable disputes of pretended Christians.' P. 53.

" To discuss this important subject more fully, (or perhaps indeed as fully as it has been here treated of,) is hardly suitable to a logical work: and yet the importance of attending to the ambiguity I have now been considering, cannot be duly appreciated, without offering some remarks on the subject-matter with which that ambiguity is connected; and such remarks again, if scantily and imperfectly developed, are open to cavil or mistake. I must take the liberty, therefore, of referring the reader to such works, both my own, and those of others, as containing something of a fuller statement of the same views. — See *Essays* (First Series,) Essay II, § 4, and Essays IV and V; — Second Series, Essay VI, § 2, p. 199; VII, § 3; and IX, § 1. — *Origin of Romish Errors*, Chap. ii, § 1. *Archbishop King's Sermon on Predestination, &c.*, and *Enclyclop. Metropol.* History, Chap. xxvii, p. 589, and Chap. xxxiv, p. 740." *

" ONE — is sometimes employed to denote strict and proper numerical Unity; sometimes, close Resemblance; — correspondence with one single description. — See ' SAME.'

——————— " ' Facies non omnibus UNA,
Nec diversa tamen; qualem decet esse sororum.'
Ov. Metam. b. ii.

" It is in the secondary or improper, not the primary and proper sense of this word, that men are exhorted to ' be of one mind;' *i. e.* to agree in their faith, pursuits, mutual affections, &c.

" It is also in this sense that two guineas, *e. g.* struck from a

* The *whole* of this article is inserted, in order that I might not appear to suppress any observations on the sin of presumption which some have attributed to Swedenborg, but which are already answered in the body of the letter.

wedge of uniform fineness, are said to be 'of one and the same form and weight, and also, of one and the same substance.' In this secondary or improper sense also, a child is said to be 'of one and the same (bodily) substance with its mother;' or, simply 'of the substance of its mother:' for these two pieces of money, and two human beings are *numerically* distinct.

"It is evidently most important to keep steadily in view, and to explain on proper occasions, these different uses of the word; lest men should insensibly slide into error on the most important of all subjects, by applying, in the secondary sense, expressions which ought to be understood in the primary and proper." — See 'PERSON.'

* "Specimens of this 'philosophy and vain deceit,' such as are to be found in various dissertations on what are called the mysterious doctrines of the Christian faith, such as I cannot bring myself to transcribe, and cannot even think of without shuddering,— it may be sometimes a profitable though a painful task to peruse, in order to estimate duly, as a warning and admonition to ourselves, the effects of misapplied learning and misdirected ingenuity. To select one instance out of many, no point in these systems of speculative theology has so much exercised the perverted powers of divines of this stamp as the mystery of the Trinity, or, as *they* might with more propriety have called it, the mystery of the divine *Unity;* for though in itself the doctrine, so sedulously inculcated throughout the Scriptures that there is but one God, seems to present no revolting difficulty, yet, on rising from the disquisitions of many scholastic divines on the inherent distinctions of the three Divine Persons, a candid reader cannot but feel that *they* have made the Unity of God the great and difficult mystery, and have, in fact, so nearly explained it away, and so bewildered the minds of their disciples, as to drive them to withdraw their thoughts habitually and deliberately from every thing connected with the subject, as the only mode left for the unlearned to keep clear of error."

Note. "It is however important to remark, that, though the Unity of the Deity is not, *in itself*, a doctrine of very mysterious difficulty, it is one which is the more earnestly dwelt on in Scripture, besides other reasons, for one resulting from the tone of the Scriptures themselves. For they would, *but for* these express declarations, naturally lead the reader either to believe in three Gods, or at least to be in doubt on the question. The doctrine of the Trinity is not so much *declared* as a distinct article of faith, as it is *implied* by the whole history recorded, and views every where taken in Scripture, of God's threefold manifestation of Himself, which are such as would present to our minds nothing inconsistent with the agency of three Divine Beings acting in concert, were it not that such sedulous care is taken to assure us of the numerical Unity of the God thus manifested to us; that in the Son 'dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead,' &c. &c. See Essay vii, (Second

* Extracted from the Errors of Romanism, p. 83. (By Archbishop Whately.)

Series), pp. 234, 235, and Essay, ix, pp. 277, 281. See also Hinds's 'Three Temples of the One God,' pp. 129, 132, for a most luminous view of this important subject.

"The reader is also referred to the articles 'One,' and 'Person,' in the Appendix to the 'Elements of Logic.' It has been doubted whether there is any foundation for the suspicion I have there expressed, that the language of some divines has a leaning towards Tritheism. The following extract will at once explain my meaning, and prove, I conceive, satisfactorily, that my apprehensions are not altogether groundless. It is taken from a work of considerable merit, and which has obtained not only much popularity, but also a peculiarly high description of patronage. Several of my readers will perhaps recognize the passage; but I purposely avoid naming the book, because it is not my object to discuss the merits of this or that individual work, but to call attention to the notions which are afloat in the world generally; and I am so far from designing to particularize the work in question, as containing any thing novel, peculiar, likely to be generally offensive, and at variance with prevailing opinions, that my meaning is the very reverse.

"'When the great Creator had finished the rest of his works, wanting another creature to rule them all, and, as their priest, to adore him in their name, he said, "Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness." In the creation of other things all is done with the tone of command, or with a mere volition. "Let there be light; let there be a firmament; let the earth bring forth so and so." But when man is to be made—a creature who is to be endued with reason and intelligence—the very image of the Maker, he uses an expression which indicates deliberation and counsel; he consults with some other august Beings (the two remaining Persons of the Trinity, no doubt,) of whom, as well as of himself, man was to be both the workmanship and the resemblance.'

"If this passage had stood alone in the Jewish Scriptures, or if the Jews had interpreted it, as this writer has done, without any reference to the other passages of Scripture which serve to qualify and guard it, they would doubtless (as the above extract seems to shew) have adopted nearly the same hypothesis as was long afterward broached by Arius, that the supreme God acts in concert 'with some other august Beings!'"

[End of the extracts from the works of Archbishop Whately. The reader will now compare them with what follows.]

Dusk.

"*Woe unto us! for the day goeth away, for the shadows of the evening are stretched out.*" (Jer. vi, 4.)

"Q. How can three distinct persons so partake of the one Divine nature or essence, as altogether to make but one God?

"A. *That is not my concern to explain;* this I am sure, that if the Scriptures be (as we all allow that they are) the Word of God, what they plainly deliver must be true; because it is, in effect, delivered by God, who can neither be himself deceived, nor will deceive me. Now that they deliver both these propositions to me, that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Ghost is God, and yet that there are not three Gods, but one God, I am as sure as I can be of any thing that is spoken or written *for my understanding*. That, therefore, both of these assertions are true and credible, I am sure. *But how, or after what manner, I am to understand them, so as to remove all shew of contradiction in them,* this the Holy Scriptures have not revealed; nor do I, therefore, presume to pronounce any thing more particularly concerning it." —*Principles of the Christian Religion Explained. A Catechism, by Archbishop Wake.* Section 15.*

† "Questions may, however, arise, as to the particular Divinity of the Son; whether, for instance, he may be considered as Divine, by himself and alone, and be compared with the Father, as it regards his several attributes or otherwise? I answer, I can only say that, as the Scripture appears to represent Christ as proceeding from the Father and being *very God, just as any son of man may be said to proceed from his natural father and be very man,* although it is quite out of my power to particularize about the process in either case; so I think I can reasonably believe Christ to be of God, and very God; *a being proceeding* from the eternal, invisible, and incomprehensible fountain of life and light, and adapted to the comprehension of creatures such as we are, as far as such comprehension is necessary to our instruction and welfare. If it be asked, whether the Father and the Son can be considered each as existing absolutely and independently of the other, and exerting the powers of independent Deity? I answer at once, I cannot tell. Reason has nothing to offer on the subject one way or the other, and the Scriptures are silent."—*Professor Lee's Sermons.—Doctrine af the Trinity, Dissertation* 1, p. 110.

† "The Father loveth the Son; his one, his dear, his only Son, or his Only begotten Son, the Son of his love and of his bosom, his Son from eternity, the everlasting Son of the Father. The Son loveth the Father equally in return, and doeth always such things as please Him. The Father, and the Son, in like manner and degree, love the Holy Ghost, who eternally and essentially proceedeth from both together; and they are infinitely and equally loved and admired by him in his turn; he being peculiarly ψυχη,

* This quotation is introduced as one instance of the *unity* being considered the mystery. Neither in this work, nor in Bishop Horne's Sermon, which are tracts circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, is any notice taken, that the term person is used in any peculiar sense. It should be borne in mind, that the extracts above quoted, are taken, with few exceptions, from the tracts circulated by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and by the Religious Tract Society; that they are not mere selections of particular passages, to the exclusion of others which qualify their meaning; but that they give, as I believe, a fair view of the subject, as designed by the Author, and understood by the reader. The few passages extracted from works *not* circulated as tracts, &c. by religious societies, are marked with a cross, † thus. The works of Goodwin and Charnock are on the catalogue of the Religious Tract Society.

the soul of love, the active energetic principle of all goodness and beneficence. He is, besides, the common centre, the bond of union and relation, by which both the Father and the Son are inseparably and eternally united, as it were consolidated and identified, by the strongest ties of natural affinity, congruity and attachment. In the Father and the Son there is mutual love, a re-action and reciprocation of the strongest affection, the sincerest cordiality, the most perfect harmony and unanimity. But, in and through the Holy Ghost, there is also joint love in the Trinity, or the Godhead; that is, the same common affection, the same mutual pleasure and delight in the same infinitely lovely and beloved individual; and this love and delight reflected and reciprocated back, from him and by him on themselves, with equal ardor and sincerity of unmixed complacency and purest benevolence. Hence the third person of the Holy and undivided Trinity, and the Holy Ghost is, as it were, the cement and solder whereby the first and second persons are still more closely related, associated, and united. Agreeably to the ancient doxology, 'through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honor and glory be unto thee, O Father Almighty, world without end."—*Doctrine of Atonement and Sacrifice, by Dr. Whitley, Page* 26.

"God himself not only undertakes to make (man,) but is pleased so to express himself, as if he called a council to consider of the making of him. Let us make man. The three persons of the Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, consult about it, and concur in it. Man, when he was made, was to be dedicated to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Into that great name we are with good reason baptized; for to that great name we owe our being. The three persons of the sacred Trinity at first concurred in counsel and operation, in forming man; as, afterwards, in his recovery from the fall."—*Commentary of Henry and Scott. Genesis, chap. i, ver.* 26, 27, 28.

† "We first should carefully study, and duly be affected with, that gracious consent, and, as it were, confederacy of the glorious Three, in designing and prosecuting our good; their unanimous agreement in uttering those three mighty words of favor to mankind, *Faciamus, Redimamus, Salvemus*, let us make man out of nothing, let us recover him from sin and perdition, let us crown him with joy and salvation. We should, with grateful resentments, observe them conspiring to employ their wisdom, in contriving fit means and methods to exert their power in the effectual accomplishment of what was requisite to the promoting of our welfare, the rescue of us from all misery, the advancing us to the highest degree of dignity, and installing us in the most perfect condition of happiness of which our nature is capable; in the prosecution of that gracious design which their joint goodness had projected for us." *With much more of the same kind.—Defence of the blessed Trinity, by Dr. Isaac Barrow.*

"We may consider, likewise, that in the very *name* of Father and Son, a near relation, alliance, and unity between two of the

persons is intimated; and, in reason, we must infer something of a similar kind for the third, so closely joined with them. It is not said 'in the name of God and his two faithful servants,' nor, 'of God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost;' which might have suggested a thought that one only of the three was God; but 'in the name of the Father and of the Son,' a style perfectly equal and familiar, without any note of distinction more than that of a personal relation, carrying with it the idea of a sameness of nature; *as among men every father and son are of the same human nature with each other*. From the very wording of the form of baptism, therefore, most reasonably might it be presumed that the two first persons named were equally divine; and the inference from thence would fairly, and, indeed, unavoidably reach to the third, to make all suitable and consistent; besides, that the terms Holy, and Spirit, evidently point the same way."

"It is likewise said, that 'grace was given us in Jesus Christ before the world began.' The words intimate that, previous to the creation of the world, something had passed in our favour above; that the plan of our future redemption was then laid; that some agreement, some covenant relative to it, had been entered into: 'grace was given in us,' not in *our proper persons*, for as yet we were not, we had no being; but in the *person of Him* who was afterwards to become our representative, our Savior, 'in Christ Jesus.' Now the plan must have been laid, the covenant entered into, by the parties who have been since graciously pleased to concern themselves in its execution. Who these are we cannot be ignorant. It was the Son of God, who took our nature upon him; and, in that nature, made a full and sufficient oblation, satisfaction, and atonement for the sins of the world. It was the Father who accepted such oblation, satisfaction, and atonement; and, in consequence, forgave those sins. It was the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son, through the preaching of the Word, and the administration of the sacraments; by his enlightening, healing, and comforting grace, to apply to the hearts of men for all the purposes of pardon, sanctification, and salvation, the merits and benefits of that oblation, satisfaction, and atonement."—*The Trinity in Unity, a Discourse by Bishop Horne*."

"Christ was appointed by God, and He Himself also undertook to be our Surety. This you have in Hebrews vii, 22. 'He was made surety of a better Testament,' or covenant, namely, of the New. . . . Of this covenant Christ is the plighter of his troth for it, the surety, the promiser, the undertaker. The verb this comes of means *to prove*, which comes from the words signifying *striking hands*, or giving one's hand as a sign of a covenant, and so to bargain with, or make up a covenant. 'Be not thou one of them that strike hands, or of them that are sureties for debts,' (Prov. xxii, 26) . . . . God did, as it were, say to Christ, 'What they owe me I require it all of your hands;' and Christ assented, and from everlasting struck hands with God to do all for us that God could require, and undertook it under the penalty that lay upon us to have undergone; yea, Christ became such a surety in this for

us, as is not to be found among men. On earth sureties are wont to enter into one and the same bond with the debtors, so as the creditor may seize on which of the two he will, whether on the debtor or on the surety, and so, as usual, on the debtor first, for him we call the principal; but in this covenant God would have Christ's single bond; and hence Christ is not only called the surety of the covenant, but the covenant, (Isa. xlix, 8, and elsewhere.) God making the covenant of grace primarily with Him, and with Him as for us, thereby his single bond alone was taken for all, that so God might be sure of satisfaction. . . . 'Thou spakest in vision to thy Holy One, and saidst, I have laid help on one that is mighty.' As if God had said, 'I know that these will fail me, and break, and never be able to satisfy me; but you are a mighty and substantial *person*, able to pay me, and I will look for my debt of you.'"—*Christ Set Forth, Goodwin*, p. 58.

"God trusted Christ before He came into the world, and saved many millions of the Jews upon His bare word; and then Christ, at his death, trusts God again as much. . . . Yea, Christ thus trusted God upon his single bond; but we, for our assurance, have both Christ and God bound to us, even God with his surety Christ; for He is God's surety, as well as ours. A double bond from two such *persons*, whom would it not secure? If God the Father and God the Son thus mutually trusted one another for our salvation, whom would it not induce to trust them both for one's own salvation, when, as otherwise, they must be damned that will not?" —*Ibid.* p. 16, *et seq.*

"Indeed, sacrifices, as they looked backward, could be no other than a transcript of the agreement between the Father and the Son; of the one's paying, and the other's accepting, the price of blood for the redemption of man; and, as they looked forward,—a type of the real performance of the sufferings on the one part, and the acceptance of them on the other part, when the fulness of time should come wherein they were actually to be undergone. This tradition of sacrifices was handed down to all nations of the world; but the knowledge of the end of them was lost."—*Christ Crucified. Charnock*, p. 65.

"If we consider it (i. e. the sacrifice of Christ) simply in itself, without any previous order, without any covenant struck between the Father and the Son concerning it, He was not obliged to have any respect to the apostate creature upon the account of it. But after a covenant struck between them, wherein it was agreed that Christ should lay down his soul as a ransom, and offer Himself an unblemished sacrifice for the sons of men, and that he should see the travail of his soul, and by his righteousness justify many, after he had borne their iniquities in his own body on the tree, God could not but accept it, unless he could have found a spot in the offering, and charged Him with a non-performance of any article covenanted between them."—*Ibid.* p. 137.

"God promiseth to be a Father to Christ, in the same sense that Christ owns Him to be His God and his Father after His resurrection, (John xx, 17,) which respects God's relation to Him as

Mediator; for, as He is considered absolutely as the Son of God, God could not so properly be said to be His God. The term implies a covenant between them; in pursuance of which, Christ was to be God's servant, and, in acceptance of this, God was the God of Christ, and promises to be His Father, manifesting His Fatherly and gracious acceptance of His services, as a father doth the obedience of a Son; and therefore Christ pleads the righteousness of God (for the obtaining the accomplishment of His grace in those that believe in Him,) as well as the love which God bore to Him as Mediator."—*Ibid.* p. 142.

"This sacrifice was of infinite value, and therefore worthy of the acceptance of an Infinite Nature. His person was of as great a dignity as the Father's, to whom he was offered. Though there be a distinction of order between the three Persons, yet not of dignity. He had no peer but God, for He was equal with Him, had equalities of perfections with God, was every way equal to the party offended, so that He is called God's fellow, one of the same nature with Him; a man, as stricken by the sword, yet His fellow, as considered in His divine nature." (Zech. xiii, 7.)—*Ibid.* p. 176.

"'Oh! Lord of hosts, how long wilt thou not be merciful to Jerusalem, and the cities of Judah?' And Zechariah saith, that he observed that 'the Lord answered the angel with good words, and comfortable,' (Zech. i, 13.) God was fain to give him good words, as we use to say, that is, words that might pacify Him; as words of comfort to us, so good words in respect to the angel's complaint. And you may observe how, in the answer God returns upon it, which he bade Zechariah write, God excuseth it, as it were, to Christ, that his church had been so long and so hardly dealt withal; as if, beyond his intention, He lays the fault on the instruments. 'I was but a little displeased, but they helped forward the affliction,' (v. 15.) This is spoken and carried after the manner of men, to show how tender God is of displeasing Christ, our Intercessor; that when Christ hath, as it were, been a long while silent, and let God alone, and his people have been ill dealt withal, He, on the sudden, in the end, intercedes and complains of it; and it is not only instantly redressed, but excused for times past with good words and comfortable words. Christ's Father will not displease Him, nor go against Him in any thing. Now that you may see a reason of this, and have all cavils and exceptions taken away, that may rise against this, and how that there is an impossibility that it should be otherwise, know that this Father and this Son, though two persons, have yet but one will between them, and but one power between them, though the Son outwardly executes all. 'My Father and I are one,' (John x, 30,) that is, have but one and the same power to save you, and one mind and will. So also 'the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do; and whatever he doeth, the same the Father doeth also,' (John v, 19.) They conspire in one, have one power, one will, and then it is no matter though God commit all power to the Son, and that the Son, though he hath all power, must ask all of the Father; for to be sure, whatever He asks, the Father hath not

power to deny, for they have but one will and power. They are one, so as if God deny Him, He must deny Himself, which the apostle tells us He cannot do, (2 Tim. ii, 13.) And so in the same sense that God is said not to have power to deny Himself, in the same sense it may be said, He hath not power to deny Christ what He asks."— *Christ Set Forth, Goodwin*, p. 172.

"As God could not testify His good will to man in a higher manner than sending His Son to be a sacrifice for him, so He could not in a higher manner testify His delight in that sacrifice than to send so great a person as the Holy Ghost to be a Solicitor to men to accept of it, and a Comforter to those who believe in it— the third Person in the blessed Trinity to preserve the honor of the oblation of the second. God would never have been at the expense of so great a gift, to keep up the credit of a person and sacrifice wherein he had no pleasure."— *Christ Crucified, Charnock*, p. 172.

† "'Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath done despite unto the spirit of grace?' Things cannot be vexed and insulted, persons may. Hence the Holy Spirit is not a thing, but a person, and therefore God. *His acts are in some sense distinct from those of God.* "He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' If the Holy Spirit were the grace of God, what could induce the apostle to declare, what none could doubt, that God knew His own working in their souls? Or to state that the Holy Spirit intercedes for Christians? that is, within them, according to God, since it would be God Himself who did it? Hence it is certain that the *work of the Holy Spirit*, in this passage is, in some sense, *distinct from the work of God;* and therefore the Holy Spirit cannot mean the grace of God, or his influence, but is truly God the Spirit, essentially one with the Father, but also mysteriously distinct."— *Christianity compared with Unitarianism, by the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel*, p. 46.

("Christ) was the fittest, in regard of His being the second Person in the Trinity. It was not fit the Father should suffer; He is regarded as the Governor of the world: who should then have been judge of the satisfaction, whether it had been sufficient, or no? Was it fit the Father should have appeared before the tribunal of the Son?— Nor was it so fit that the Spirit of God should undertake it; because, as there was a necessity of satisfaction to content the justice of God, so there was a necessity of applying this satisfaction, and quickening the hearts of men to believe and accept it, that they might enjoy the fruits of this sacrifice. The order of the three Persons had then been disturbed; and that Person, whereby the Father and the Son execute all other things, had changed his operation."— *Christ's Death, Charnock*, p. 78.

"Christ is a Person in the Godhead distinct from the Father, 'Advocate with the Father;' the Father and the Advocate are here distinct; a judge and an advocate are different *persons*, have

different offices, are exercised in different acts. The Father is considered as the governor; and the Advocate, as a pleader."—*Ibid.* p. 222.

"In His incarnation, He came from the Father to acquaint us with His gracious purposes, and how far He had agreed with God on our behalf; and at his ascension, He went from us to the Father, to sue out the benefits He had so dearly purchased. He drew up an answer upon the cross, to the bill, that sin by virtue of the law had drawn against us; and ascended to heaven, as an Advocate to plead that answer upon his throne, and rejoin to all the replies against it. . . . . When His offering was accepted, He went to heaven to the supreme Judge, to improve this acceptation of His sacrifice, by a negociation which holds and continues to this day. Christ is entered into heaven."—*Ibid.* p. 227.

"Q. Whither did our Savior ascend?

"A. Into the heaven of heavens, the presence of God; where His human nature is seated far above all angels and archangels, all principalities and powers; even at the right hand of God.

"Q. What mean you by His sitting at the right hand of God?

"A. The advancement of His human nature to the height of dignity and authority in the presence of God; the right hand being esteemed the place of greatest honor and favor. Or it may import, His sitting in His human shape on the right hand, or that bright throne or resplendent glory which visibly accompanies and manifests some extraordinary presence of God;—the usual symbol of His power and majesty, which was probably what St. Stephen seems to have seen, when he beheld the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God.

"Q. What are we obliged to believe concerning our Savior's ascension?

"A. That the only begotten and eternal Son of God, after He rose from the dead, did, with the same soul and body with which He rose, by a true and local translation, convey Himself from the earth on which He lived, through all the regions of the air, through all the celestial orbs, until He came unto the heaven of heavens, the most glorious presence of the Majesty of God.

"Q. What benefit do we particularly receive from Christ's exaltation in heaven?

"A. The great advantage of His intercession for us at the right hand of God; where He is a perpetual patron and advocate in our behalf, to plead our cause, to solicit our concernments, to represent our wants, and to offer up our prayers and requests to God, by virtue of his meritorious sacrifice. So that the true penitent may expect forgiveness; the weak but sincere Christian strength and assistance, having so powerful a Mediator with the Father. Those that suffer and are persecuted, may depend upon their high priest for comfort and support; since he is touched with a sense of our infirmities. And all may come boldly to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy and help in time of need; because our prayers are offered to God by so powerful and prevalent a hand." *Nelson's Fasts and Festivals. Ascension.*

Midnight.

"*A land of darkness, as darkness itself, and of the shadow of death without any order, and where the light is as darkness.*" Job x, 22.
"*I clothe the heavens with blackness.*" Is. l, 3.

"'At that day,' says Christ, 'you shall ask in my name: and I say not to you that I will pray the Father for you, for the Father himself loveth you.' John xvi, 26, 27. . . Now of that time when he shall be in heaven, He says, 'I say not that I will pray for you,' which is not meant, that Christ prays not for us in heaven; but rather those very words are the highest intimation, that He would and doth pray for us, that can be. When men would most strongly intimate their purpose of a kindness, they meant to do for one, they use to say, 'I do not say that I love you, or, that I will do this or that for you;' which is as much as to say, I will surely do it, and do it to purpose."—*Goodwin, Christ Set Forth,* p. 180.

"It is such a speech as men use, when they would express the greatest reason that another hath to rest confident and assured of their love.' 'I do not love you; no, not I.' *It is an expressing a thing by its contrary, which is most emphatical!* As when a man hath the greatest good turn done him that can be, we use to say, 'You are shrewdly hurt.' It is such an expression as Paul used to the Corinthians: 'I converted your souls when you thought not of it; I caught you with guile; forgive me this wrong.' So says Christ here, 'I say not that I will pray for you;' when the truth is, that it is the chief work which He doth in heaven; 'He liveth ever to intercede; as He ever lives, so to intercede ever, and never to hold his peace, till sinners are saved.' "—*Ibid.* p. 223.

"Now to raise up our apprehensions how potent and prevalent this intercession of Christ must needs be, let us consider both the person interceding, namely, Christ; and the person with whom Christ intercedes for this favor, which is God; the one, the Son; the other, the Father; and so the greatness of Christ with God, and the graciousness of God to Christ, together with the oneness of wills and unity of affections in them both. So that Christ will be sure to ask nothing, which His Father will deny; and His Father will not deny any thing, which he shall ask."—*Ibid.* p.150.

"All matters of intercession are carried, we know, by way of favor; and therefore look, how prevalent, in a way of merit, His being God makes His death in its kind, no less prevalent doth His being the Son of God make his intercession in its kind; namely, in a way of obtaining grace and mercy; yea, so prevalent of itself it is, that we might build upon it alone, even as much as upon his death. And, indeed, Christ intercedes, not only in the virtue and strength of His satisfaction (though in that also,) and of His obedience to His Father; but also in the strength of his relation as a Son, who pleads his own grace and interest in God, as He is

His Son; which is a consideration that doth always actually exist and abide. Whereas His obedience, though perfect, was but once offered up, and its existence is but virtual; but He continues a Son for ever, not virtually only, but actually." . . . . *Ibid.* p. 153.

"And how effectual must the intercession of such a Son be, who is so great a Son of so great a Father; equal with Him, and the express image of His person! Never any son so like, and in so peculiar a transcendent manner a son; as the relation of sonship among men is but a shadow of it. Christ is one with the Father, as Himself often speaks; and therefore, if His Father should deny Him any thing, He should then cease to be one with him; He must then deny Himself, which God can never do."—*Ibid.* p. 154.

"The Spirit is an advocate to indite our petitions, and Christ is an advocate to present them. Some distinguish them, that Christ is an advocate by way of office, and the Spirit by way of assistance; but certainly, the Spirit is an advocate by way of office to counsel us, as Christ is an advocate by way of office to plead for us; and the Spirit is as much sent to do the one in our hearts, as Christ was called back to heaven to do the other for our *persons*. The Spirit is an Intercessor on earth, and Christ is an Intercessor in heaven. Again, as there are two courts we are summoned to appear in, the court of the Supreme Judge and the court of the Judge's deputy, our own consciences; Christ clears us by his plea at God's bar, and sets us right with the offended Father; the Spirit, as Christ's deputy, being sent in His name, clears us at the bar of our own consciences. Christ answers the charge of the law, in the court of God's justice, and the Spirit answers the accusations of sin, in the court of God's deputy; the one pleads for our discharge above, the other pleads for our peace below, and the voice of God's spirit is as mighty in us, as the voice of Christ's blood is mighty for us."—*Christ's Death, &c. Charnock*, p. 230.

"(The petition of Christ) is in the nature of a claim and demand. It is not a petition for that which is at the liberty of the petitioned person to grant or refuse; but for that which the petitioner has a right to by way of purchase, and the person petitioned to cannot in justice deny. An advocate is an officer in a court of judicature, demanding audience and sentence in a judicial way; so that this intercession of Christ is not a bare precarious intercession; for as, when He was in the world, 'He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes," (Matt. vii, 29,) so in heaven, He intercedes as one having authority, by virtue of his Mediatorial power, and not as an ordinary supplicant. He hath a right to demand; on earth, indeed, he had only promises of assistance to put in suit; but in heaven, He pleads the conditions performed on his part, upon which the promises made to Christ become due to Him. It is now, 'Father, I have glorified Thee upon the earth, now glorify me with Thy own self,' (John xvii, 4, 5.) He pleads for His people as they are the gift of His Father, and as they have received His words, (v. 8.) He pleads His own commission, as one sent (v. 23.) He reminds the Father of the covenant between them both, as God gave Him a command what He should do in the

world; which was no other than an injunction to perform those conditions which had been agreed upon, and that will of God, expressed in the covenant of redemption, which is called the will of God, (Heb. x, 7.) Christ, having done this will, mediates for the performance of the conditions God was bound to by this covenant; and claims the performance of them as a debt due to His meritorious obedience on the cross; so that it is not a desire only in a way of charity, but a claim in a way of justice, by virtue of meriting; and a demand of the performance of the promise."—*Ibid.* p. 252.

"He sat down, expecting till His enemies be made his footstool," (Heb. x, 13)—expecting the full fruits of that sacrifice, in the complete subjection of His enemies; and, consequently, the full felicity of Himself and His Friends; and all this time of expectation, He is suing out the promise of God to Him, asking that inheritance which was assured Him in the covenant between them (Psalm ii, 8.) This is the reason of his sitting down for ever, to exercise His priesthood for ever, in the presence of the King and Judge of all the earth. He is always in the presence of His Father, in the dignity of His person, and fulness of His merit, continually spreading every part of His meritorious sacrifice in the view of God. The High Priest entered into the Holy of Holies but once a year; but this High Priest sits for ever in the court, in a perpetual exercise of His function, both as a Priest and a sacrifice. And since His own sacrifice for sins offered on earth, was sufficient, He hath nothing to do perpetually in heaven, but to sprinkle the blood of that sacrifice upon the mercy-seat. He is never out of the presence of God; and the infiniteness of His compassions may hinder us from imagining a silence in him, when any accusations are brought in against us. The accusations might succeed well, were He out of the way; but, being always present, He is always active in his solicitations; no clamor can come against us, but He hears it, as being on the right hand of his Father; and appears as our attorney there, in the presence of God, to answer it, as the high priest appeared in the holy of holies for all the people."—*Ibid.* 262.

"If we have Him and his favor, we may be sure that we have the favor of God by His means. For He sitteth on the right hand of God His Father, as our proctor and attorney; pleading and suing for us, in all our needs and necessities."—*Homilies, Sermon on Good Friday.*

"If any man sin, it implies, that every man ought to make reflections on his conscience, lament his condition, turn his eye to his great Advocate, acquaint him with his state, and entertain him afresh in his cause. Though He lives for ever to make intercession, it is only for those who come to God by Him as their agent and solicitor; for those who come to the Judge, but first come to Him as their attorney."—*Christ's Death, Charnock*, 219.

"He manages not an intercession merely in a way of charity; but in a way of authority, as a person entrusted by God, and dig-

nified to this end; not only as our friend, but as a divine officer; as an attorney may manage the suit of his kinsman, not only as being related to his client, but as being admitted by the court into such an office. Christ is not only admitted as one of kin to us, but commissioned as Mediator for us."— *Christ's Death, Charnock*, 231.

†"It is His propitiation that He pleads. And we might be apt to suppose that His blood had lost its value and efficacy, were no mention made of it in heaven since the time it was shed. But now we see that it is of esteem there; since it is continually represented in the intercession of the Great Advocate, the Attorney General for the church of God." * — *Matthew Henry's Comments.* John, 1 Ep. ii, 1.

"He intercedes for nothing but what He knows the Father wills. What He did on earth was not without, but with, His Father's will; what he doth in heaven, hath the same rule. As they were joined in the counsel of reconciliation and peace which was 'between them both' (Zech. vi, 13,) so they are joined in the counsel of advocacy and intercession which is between them both; the one as the Director, the other as the Solicitor. Their wills are in the highest manner conformable to one another, and the will of the Father as much known by the soul of Christ in heaven, as it was on earth. He asks nothing, but he first reads in the copy of His Father's instructions, and considers what His will was. He reads over the annals of His Father's decrees and records; He doth nothing but what He sees the Father do; He takes the copy of all from His Father; and whatsoever Christ doth, the same doth the Father also. They have but one will in the whole current of redemption; so that He can plead nothing in regard of the persons for whom He appears, and the good things He desires for them, but it is according to the will of God. . . . . If He gives

* Bishops Beveridge, Reynolds, Pearson, Archbishop Tillotson, also Drs. Barrow, Hammond, &c., take fundamentally the same view of the subject; although some of them do not enter into such particulars as are supplied by others. A few, after following out the details in the lowest and most literal sense, appear to have occasionally some misgivings, as to whether it is possible that such things can be. Of these Bishop Beveridge appears to be one — who, in his sermon on Christ's Ascension, after describing the office of intercession in the usual manner, observes, "We must not think that He makes any solemn prayers to His Father, as we do, or, at least, ought to do. No; whatsoever He would have, He only actually wills it should be so, and immediately it is just so as He would have it." Still, however, by this observation, the pious and learned prelate seems to mean no more than that our Savior's prayers to the Father in heaven, are like the one He offered up on the earth. "Father, *I will* that they also whom Thou hast given me, be with me where I am," &c. Indeed, this is the explanation the Bishop afterward gives. Unfortunately, however, many a learned commentator will not allow of it; insisting, it seems, for various reasons, upon prayers and entreaties, though tacit, such as Christians commonly offer up. Hence some maintain that, when our Savior says, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," the expression *I will* means *I wish*, *I implore*, &c. This is the meaning attached to the word in Parkhurst's Lexicon; as also in Bloomfield's Synopsis, where any other meaning than that of petition or supplication is treated as absurd. Others, like Keach, give, as will be seen, a different turn to the passage; but in both cases, the reader is thrown back upon those popular views of intercession and mediation, which are described above; because the mediation or intercession going on in heaven, they conceive to be of the same nature with that which took place on earth; with this additional advantage, that Christ, in heaven, can more effectually plead his own merits.

blessings for the glory of his Father, He then, in his suit, urgeth the glory of His Father as an argument to obtain them. God must, then, be an enemy to his own glory, if He be deaf to his Son's suit; and since the Advocate's plea is suitable to the Father's will, He cannot reject the will of his Son, without offering violence to His own will. They are both one in will, and one in affection. His human will cannot desire any thing in opposition to the Divine."*— *Christ's Death, Charnock*, p. 278.

"His advocacy for us is a confession of our interest in Him, our owning of Him: by virtue of which confession, or claim, we are set right in the court of God, as those for whom He hath shed His blood. This intercessory demand, or asking, is accompanied with the presenting the memorials of his death. It is a commemoration of the sacrifice which He offered on earth for our expiation; and the whole power of intercession, with the prevalence of it, is wholly upon this foundation; it is a presenting the efficacy of his death, the virtue of his blood, the pleasure of God in the sacrifice offered by Him. It is by the displaying the whole merit of his passion, that he doth solicit for us. Intercession is not properly a sacerdotal act, without respect to the sacrifice. It

* The following are extracts from Keach's Metaphors, on The Office of Christ as an Advocate. (Articles 11, 12, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 23, 27.) An advocate usually speaks comfort to his client, especially if the cause will bear it. Jesus Christ outdoes all advocates under heaven, in all things; for He speaks so as never man spake like Him. He bids them ask what they will, and He will do it for them. Ask and it shall be done, that your joy may be full. An advocate can use freedom of speech, and speaks boldly to the judge; Christ most fully answers to this where he saith, Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. An advocate knows the fittest time to manage business; and every thing is beautiful in its season. The Lord Jesus knows the fittest time to manage business on the behalf of souls; there is an acceptable time for him to be heard, and to do his work. When Satan tempts, when he desires to sift, when he accuseth to God, as in the case of Job, when provocation is given and the enemy lays siege against the soul, then is a fit time for our advocate to work; this, Christ is well acquainted with, &c. An advocate hath the judge's ear more than those that are but standers by, that may be somewhat concerned in a cause; but the judge listens to him, because he expects him to speak to the purpose, who hath authority so to do. Christ hath the ear of the heavenly Judge, because he always speaks to the very life of the cause. He was heard in all things, and at all times; 'I know that thou hearest me always.' He only is authorized to plead for poor sinners. An advocate is much honored by the judge in all his replies; sometimes gives him the title of brother. Christ is very much honored by God, He calls Him His fellow, and will have all men honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. An advocate knows much of the judge's mind, being skilled in all the rules that he judgeth by; and is well acquainted with his nature and disposition. Jesus Christ knows much of the mind of God, 'being always by Him, and as one brought up with Him,' &c. (Prov. viii.) An able advocate doth, and that not seldom, carry causes, that are very doubtful, to others; Christ did frequently, when on earth, and doth, since his departure into heaven, carry causes doubtful to others. He carried the cause in a great trial against Satan, who had made strong attempts against Him, after He had fasted forty days, &c. A good advocate is always very diligent, and mindful of his clients' concerns. Christ is very diligent, never guilty of any neglect in acting for His people; He went about doing good, pleaded often; pleaded strongly with crying and tears; used mighty and prevailing arguments with God, on the behalf of his flock on earth; pleads for great things for them, &c. A wise and honorable advocate lieth fair for preferment, *i. e.* in some space of time to be a judge himself, when his work and business of advocacy ceaseth. The Lord Jesus is the wisest and most honorable advocate that ever was, and therefore, is the undoubted heir to preferment, yea, to the greatest of preferments; He being appointed the judge of all the world, by a former and unutterable decree; 'Him hath God ordained to be judge of the quick and the dead,' &c.

was with the blood of the sacrifice, that the high priest was to enter into the holy of holies, and sprinkle it there. The same blood that had been shed without, on the day of expiation, was to be carried within, the veil. What was done typically, Christ doth really; first give Himself a sacrifice, and then present Himself as the sacrifice for us. The apostle shews us the manner of it (Heb. xii, 24.) The blood of Christ is a speaking blood, as well as the blood of Abel. It speaks in the same manner as Abel's blood did; though not for the same end. As the blood of Abel presenting itself before the eyes of God, was as powerful to draw down the vengeance of God, as if it had uttered a cry so loud as to reach to heaven; so the blood of Christ, being presented before the throne of God, powerfully excites the favor of God, by the loudness of its cry. He speaks by his blood, and his blood speaks by its merit. The petitions of his lips had done us no good, without the voice of his blood. He stands as a lamb slain, when He presents the prayers of the saints (Rev. v, 6, 8,) with his bleeding wounds open, as so many mouths full of pleas for us;* and every one of them is the memorial and mark of the things which He suffered, and for what end He suffered them; as the wounds of a soldier, received in the defence, and for the honor of his country, displayed to persons sensible of them, are the loudest and best pleas for the grant of his request. If the party-colored rainbow, being looked upon by God, reminds Him of His covenant not to destroy the world again by a deluge (Gen. ix, 14, 16;) much more are the wounds which Christ bears, both in his hands, feet, and side, remembrances to him of the covenant of grace, made with repenting and believing sinners. The look of God upon those wounds, whereby so great an oblation is remembered, doth as efficaciously move Him to look kindly upon us, as the look upon the rainbow disposeth Him to the continuance of the world. If our Savior had not a mouth to speak, He hath blood to plead; and His blood cries louder in heaven for us, than His voice did in any of the prayers He uttered upon earth; for by this, His performance of the articles on His part is manifested, and the performance of the promises on God's part solicited; when He sees what the Redeemer hath done, He reflects upon what He Himself is to do; the blood of Christ speaks the tenor of the covenant of Redemption made with Christ on behalf of sinners."—*Ibid.* 254.

* In Scott's Christian Life, which is, I believe, a popular work, and a reprint of which, with the rest of his works issued from the Clarendon Press, at Oxford, in the year 1826, the same idea is enlarged upon; and in the Chapter on the Intercession of Christ, the whole process is explained with the same degree of minuteness as that which is exemplified in these extracts. The chapter is divided as follows. "First — The intercession and advocation of Christ in heaven, is a solemn address of our blessed Savior to God the Father in our behalf. Secondly, This address is performed by the presenting His sacrificed body to the Father in heaven. Thirdly, It is continued and perpetuated, by the perpetual oblation, or presenting of this His sacrificed body. Fourthly, In virtue of this perpetual oblation, He doth always successfully move and solicit God; and this, first, to receive and graciously accept our sincere and hearty prayer; and, secondly, to empower Him to bestow on us all those graces and favors, which, in consideration of His sacrifice, God hath promised to us."

"As therefore He is entered into heaven, sat down at the right hand of God, and has maintained the plea of his sacrifice for so many hundred years since He first entered His suit, it is a proof that the pleading His death, and the sight of His sacrificed body, is not wearisome and distasteful to God. It is not like a carcass that He desires to be buried out of his sight. He joyfully hears the voice of His blood sounding in his ears to this moment. Well, therefore, might the apostle, upon this account, make so great a challenge to all, 'Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us," (Rom. viii, 33, 34.) Christ by His death appeased the wrath of God; by His resurrection He was acquitted by the justice of God; by His ascension He took possession of His regal throne; by His sitting at the right hand of God, He prevalently pleads His sacrifice for the ends for which it was offered; and by His spirit applies His blood to them that believe in Him."—*Christ Crucified, Charnock*, p. 157.

"He understands our cause; He understands the law according to which he is to plead the articles of agreement between the Father and Himself; and He understands the fulness and redundancy of His own merit. He uses arguments proper to the cause he pleads, and drawn from the nature of the person He applies himself to. When He meets with the church in weakness and distress by potent adversaries, and would have the Jews delivered, and the temple rebuilt, He solicits God as the Lord of Hosts (Zech. i, 12.) When He finds His people in danger of sin and temptation, He petitions God under the title of Holy (John xvii, 11.) When He would have promises performed to them, He appeals to the righteousness of the Father (John xvii, 25,) it being part of His righteousness to fulfil that word which He hath passed, and make good the grant which so great a Redeemer merited. He pleads the respects He had to the Divine will in the exercise of every part of his office, both of Priest and Prophet (Psalm xl, 9, 10,) (a prophetic psalm of Christ.) 'I have not hid Thy righteousness within my heart, I have declared Thy faithfulness and Thy salvation, I have not concealed Thy loving-kindness and Thy truth from the great congregation.' The adding *thy* to every one of them is emphatical: it was Thy righteousness I had commission to declare, Thy faithfulness I had order to proclaim, Thy mercy I had a charge to publish; Thou wert as much interested in all that I did, as I myself was. I shall be counted false and a liar, Thou wilt be counted unjust and cruel, if all be not fulfilled as I have spoken; since it was Thy rule I observed, and Thy glory I aimed at in declaring it. Disgrace not Thyself and Me in refusing the petition of such a supplicant, who believes in My word which I gave out by Thy authority. Surely as Christ observed the will of God upon earth, so He is wise to intercede for nothing but according to those rules He observed in His humiliation, which was whatsoever might honor and manifest the righteousness, faithfulness, salvation, truth, and loving-kindness of the Father. This is a part of His wisdom, to plead for nothing but for what He

hath the nature of God to subscribe to His petitions, and back Him in them. It is not for the honor of an advocate to undertake a cause he cannot bring to pass; nor will any wise man engage in a suit which he hath not some strong probability to effect. Our Lord, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, stands more upon His honor than to undertake a cause He cannot accomplish."*—*Christ's Death, Charnock*, p. 234.

Not only however is Christ an intercessor for us, but it appears that we are also sometimes intercessors for Christ. I quote from the *eighth edition* of Family Prayers, by a clergyman of the Church of England.—*Rev. T. Coterill, Fellow of St. John's, Cambridge.*

† "Pardon us, therefore, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy mercies. Have regard unto Him who knew no sin, and was made a sin-offering for us, that we might be made Thy righteousness in Him. Look upon Jesus, the Son of David, the Son of Thy love. Lord, remember Him, and all his troubles. Remember His offering, and accept His sacrifice. Turn not away the face of Thine Anointed, who, by His own blood, is entered into heaven itself, and now appeareth in Thy presence for us. Hear us, we pray Thee, for His sake, and for the glory of Thy name."

"*The angel, on hearing these words, was silent for a long time, standing motionless in astonishment; but when his surprise was somewhat abated, he thus delivered himself; 'Is it possible that the Christian world should be so infatuated, and wander so far from sound reason into such bewildered conceits, and establish the fundamental doctrine of salvation on such paradoxes?'*" &c.—Swedenborg's Memorable Relation, Article 134. Universal Theology.

"*And when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.*" Rev. viii, 1.

My Christian reader, allow me to ask a few questions. When the idea of separation, and of distinctness of office and person, is

*The works of Goodwin and Charnock, from which these extracts are taken, *are now circulated by the Religious Tract Society*, who have established district Libraries all over the kingdom, and in many of the colonies. To shew the high opinion which they entertain of these doctrines, it may be observed that, in the address of the committee as published in the Report for the year 1837, the nature and qualities of the tracts are thus alluded to:—"They should consist of pure truth"... "uncontaminated with error, undisturbed with human systems, clear as crystal, like the River of Life."... "Here should be seen nothing but Divine Truth, unmingled, unadulterated, pure as it came from heaven, and fit for the whole human race to imbibe."—"By pure truth," is meant "those Evangelical Principles of the Reformation, in which Luther, Calvin, and Cranmer were agreed, and that system of doctrine and scriptural interpretation, which is comprised in the Harmony of the Confessions of the Reformed Churches, both at home and abroad." .... Among the committee it is said, "There has been such a perfect understanding of these principles, as they relate to the *doctrinal sentiments*, and the bond of union which connect the members of this institution in affection and in exertion, that these endeavors have been easy to themselves, and have been acknowledged to be satisfactory to the society at large." I will here only add, that I have not availed myself of all the illustrations of the doctrine of the Trinity and Atonement which the Society have circulated as "pure truth,"—"uncontaminated with error,"—"clear as crystal," and "fit for the whole human race to imbibe." More might have been added; but some of my readers may think perhaps that enough has been given, and others, perhaps, too much.

thus so constantly dwelt upon, and, as some may conceive, so satisfactorily explained, will it not be impressed upon the mind more forcibly than the idea of unity, which is so seldom adverted to; and which, even when adverted to, is so often explained in the sense of unanimity? If an author writes a hundred pages upon the Trinity, and four lines upon the Unity, which idea is likely to be most strongly impressed upon the reader's mind? In instructing the common people, they best understand our meaning by conveying it to them in sensible images. Tell them of three persons, and they will readily understand you. Tell them you are speaking of three persons who have but one essence, and they do not know what you mean; for they understand what person means, but not what essence means. Tell them, that by person you do not mean what is commonly meant, but only a distinct mode of subsistence, they cannot understand what you mean by mode of subsistence; still they can give a meaning to the word person, and, when you speak of three persons, will find no difficulty in attaching the ordinary ideas to the expression; more particularly when, in expounding the doctrine, you yourself may be constantly using the word in the same sense in which they do. Now, in addition to all this, tell them that one person is gone up to sit at the right hand of another person, they will find no difficulty in understanding this in their way. Tell them that by right hand you do not mean a member of the body, for that God is without body, parts, or passions, that you mean only that the person is invested with great power, they may possibly arrive at some true idea of what you mean, still retaining the idea of two persons, though not forming to themselves any conception of their relative situation in regard to place. Tell them that one person intercedes with the other person, they will immediately think of one person speaking to the other person, or addressing him by some signs or symbols. Tell them that this person is a mediator between you and God, that he prays to God, that he pleads his own merits to God, and undertakes to communicate your prayers to God, the idea of two separate existences becomes then tolerably clear, more particularly if you should give no further interpretation of what is meant by intercessor or mediator. You would think it very wrong for a person to presume, that in all this you were teaching a duality, or (if you add your explanation of the personality of the Holy Ghost,) a triumvirate of Gods; for you maintain that although God be three persons, yet he is only one in essence. True, but a poor man does not know what essence means. Tell him, that by person you mean, as you have said, only a distinct mode of subsistence, he will answer that you are talking metaphysics. If, to avoid metaphysics, you say nothing upon the subject, then the idea uppermost in his mind will be, that of three Gods planning, covenanting, counselling, agreeing, co-operating, and so forth, with each other, upon the subject of his salvation. Believe me, then, that the case is not one of controversy, or of argument for the schools. In so teaching an ordinary mind, the question is not merely what *your* ideas are, but what are the ideas which *your pupil* cannot help af-

fixing to your words. You may reply, it is not your fault if your instructions are misunderstood. The question is not here, whose fault it is, but whether it be the fact. I am not speaking so much of the doctrine itself, as of the effect which such a mode of teaching it produces, according to the known laws of the human mind.* For while the doctrine professedly maintains that God is one, the idea produced in the mind of the disciple is that of three separate Gods. Indeed, what terms are there which can be used to signify three separate beings, which have not been used in explaining the Tripersonality? The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, have been called three separate persons, without the slightest notice to the ordinary reader that the term person is used in any peculiar sense; they are called three intelligent agents, three distinct subsistences; also individuals, parties, separate† existences, nay, as separate and distinct as Peter, James, and John; the Son is declared to be generated of the Father, and to partake of the same Divine Nature just as any other Son is begotten of his father, and partakes of the same human nature. All three are said to plan, concur, agree, and conspire together; one is said to be appeased; another, to pacify; another, to convey and apply the tidings of pacification; they are said to be one, as a unanimous society is one; they have all separate offices, in many cases separate properties, and receive separate worship. Yet all this, we are told, is not a system of Tritheism; now, even if it were not, how are the generality of uneducated persons to help mistaking it as such? Is the danger avoided by telling them to say with their lips, and 'yet they are not three Gods, but one God?' Does an evil not exist, because we tell the person not to acknowledge it, and he obeys the injunction? Is a malady the less dangerous, because the physician declares he was not concerned in producing it, and forbids the patient to confess its existence; although all the time it may be consuming the vitals of his system? Besides, if I give two meanings to a word, and if, perhaps, for every time I use the word in one sense, I use it, and hear it used, a thousand times in another, which of the two senses, *ceteris paribus*, will the occurrence of the word be most likely to suggest? Will not the law of association, as it is called, incline me to assign to the word its most frequent meaning; more particularly where this meaning is clear, and the other obscure; for a clear idea produces a stronger effect upon the mind, than one that is obscure and indistinct? If this be the case, what sort of reflections are those which are suggested by a survey of the mode of teaching adopted in the Christian world? Allow me to draw

* Both those who teach, and those who have been disciplined in, the popular views of the Trinity, generally disavow, in the strongest words, the doctrine of Tritheism; nor have I ever personally known but one exception in which the pupil openly avowed the existence of three Gods, although I can have no doubt that every one from whom he had received instruction would, in the strongest words, have disclaimed the idea. His notion of unity was the same, it is presumed, with that of unanimity. Though, however, I have personally known only one instance of this kind, yet there are many who conceive of the three Divine Persons partaking of one and the same divine nature, just as we conceive one human nature to be common to Peter, James, and John.

† Bishop Burgess' Catechism.

your serious attention to the following extract from a work entitled an 'Elementary Course of Theological Lectures,' by the Rev. W. D. Conybeare. Speaking of the passages in Scripture which refer to the union of Christ with the Father, he observes, 'It has ever appeared strongly to me, that these texts which thus exhibit Christ as the only sensible manifestation of the Divine nature to man, point out a most important adaptation of the Christian scheme to the wants of our nature, and the limitation of our faculties. To minds constituted like ours, the abstract idea of the Divine Nature which no man hath seen at any time, which hath nothing like unto itself whereunto we may liken it, conveys no definite impression; and abstract ideas, thus vaguely conceived, have little power to move our affections. Surely, then, it is most mercifully provided, that, to the Christian mind, this incomprehensible essence is sensibly represented under a form, upon which our devotional affections can fix and attach themselves; since the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.' In the person of Christ, a sensible object, such as our faculties need for their contemplation, is placed before them; and *that sensible object embodies to our minds all the abstract perfections of the Divine Nature.*"—*Second Ed.* p. 448.

Allow me here to add the doctrine of Swedenborg upon this subject; namely, that there is one God; that the Lord Jesus Christ is that one God; and that, in this unity, there is a Trinity of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

As, however, it is one of the frailties of human nature, when a person is representing the opinions of his opponent, to be less careful in speaking the truth, than when he is stating his own; so the doctrine of Swedenborg, in regard to the Trinity, has often been represented as the same with that of Sabellius and other ancient heretics, who confounded the Divine with the human natures; the entire untruth of which statement may be judged of by the following extract from the Four Leading Doctrines:—

"That the Lord put off, by successive steps, the Humanity from the Mother, and put on a Humanity from the Divinity in himself, which is the Divine Humanity and the Son of God. That the Lord possessed both Divinity and Humanity, Divinity from his Father Jehovah, and Humanity from the Virgin Mary, is well known. Hence He was both God and man, having a Divine Essence and a human nature, a Divine Essence from the Father, and a human nature from the mother; whence He was equal to the Father, as touching His Divinity, and inferior to the Father, as touching His Humanity; and, further, this human nature from the mother was not transmuted into the Divine Essence, neither commixed with it: all which is taught by the doctrine of faith, called the Athanasian Creed. Indeed, such transmutation of the human nature into the Divine Essence, or commixtion therewith, is impossible. Still the same creed teaches, that the Divinity or Godhead took, that is, united, to itself the Humanity or Manhood, just as the soul is united to its body, so

that they were not two, but one person. From these two positions, then, must follow this conclusion, that the Lord put off the Humanity taken from the mother, which, in itself, was like unto the humanity of another man, and consequently material, and put on a Humanity from the Father, which, in itself, was like His Divinity, and consequently substantial: so that the Humanity also was made Divine. Hence it is, that in the prophets, the Lord is called, even with respect to the Humanity, Jehovah and God; and in the Evangelists, the Lord, God, the Messiah or Christ, and the Son of God in whom we must believe, and by whom we are to be saved.

"In consequence of His having from the first a Humanity from the mother, which he put off by successive steps, the Lord, during His abode in the world, was alternately in two states; the one a state of humiliation, or exinanition, and the other a state of glorification, or union with the Divinity, which is called the Father: He was in a state of humiliation at the time, and in the degree, that He was in the humanity from the mother; and He was in the state of glorification, at the time, and in the degree, that he was in the Humanity from the Father. In the state of humiliation He prayed to the Father, as to a being distinct from Himself; but in the state of glorification He spoke with the Father as with Himself. In this latter state He said, that the Father was in Him, and He in the Father, and that the Father and He were One; but in the other state he underwent temptations, and suffered the cross, and prayed to the Father not to forsake Him; for the Divinity could not be tempted, much less could it suffer the cross. Hence it further appears, that, by temptations followed by continual victories, and by the passion of the cross, which was the last of those temptations, He fully conquered the hells, and fully glorified the Humanity, as was shewn above."

Having now shewn the way, in which some of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity are explained, I proceed, finally, to shew the other side of the question, and to afford a few examples of the manner in which they are left unexplained, or, in which the more humble and sober-minded consider these doctrines to be incomprehensible, upon any commonly received principles.

"*Woe unto you that desire the day of the Lord! to what end is it for you? the day of the Lord is darkness, and not light.*" Amos v, 18.

"But now once, in the end of the world, Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." . . . . How, and in what particular way, (this sacrifice) had this efficacy, there are not wanting persons who have endeavored to explain; but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made; i. e. pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the Scripture has, as surely it has, left this

matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat* in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of farther information, unless he can shew his claim to it. Some have endeavored to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the Scripture has authorized; others, probably because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the world to his instruction, example, and government of the church, &c. It is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered on our part, without disputing how it was procured on His."—*Butler's Analogy, Part 2, Chap. 5.*

"The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery; as much as the Christian dispensation."—*Ibid.*

"Since the constitution of nature, and the methods and designs of Providence in the government of the world, are above our comprehension, we should acquiesce in and rest satisfied with our ignorance, turn our thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our capacities,† and which is our real business and concern. Knowledge is not our proper happiness. Whoever will, in the least, attend to the thing, will see, that it is the gaining, not the having of it, which is the entertainment of the mind. Indeed, if the proper happiness of man consisted in knowledge, considered as a possession or treasure, men who are possessed of the largest share would have a very ill time of it; as they would be infinitely more sensible than others of their poverty in this respect. Thus he who increases knowledge would eminently increase sorrow."—*Butler's Sermon on the Ignorance of Man.*

* "'Who is ever at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.' Into the speculations of the recent commentators on the ideas meant to be expressed by these phrases, it is not necessary for me to enter. The former is unquestionably an oriental metaphor, meant to express dignity next to that of God; and the latter, the intercession which Jesus Christ makes for Christians. Into the mode in which this is done, it becomes us not too curiously to pry. Whether the intercession is continually made, or whether it can be necessary to be continually made, we know not; but that the effect of this intercession on the part of Jesus Christ, towards God, in behalf of the faithful, is perpetual, we may be assured from the words of our apostle himself, 'seeing that He ever liveth to make intercession for us.'" Heb. vii, 25.—*Bloomfield's Synopsis.* Rom. viii, 34.

"Christ's ascension to the right hand of God is marvellous; be-

* Nearly the whole.

† The class of divines to which this learned Prelate belongs, often distinguish the mysteries of Christianity from what they call its plain and practical truths; by which they, in general, seem chiefly to mean those which refer to the ordinary duties of moral and civil life.

cause it is a sure token that heaven is a certain fixed place, and not a mere state. That bodily presence of the Savior which the apostles handled, is not here, it is elsewhere, it is in heaven. This contradicts the notions of cultivated and speculative minds, and humbles the reason. Philosophy considers it more rational to suppose, that Almighty God, as being a spirit, is in every place, and in no one place more than another. It would teach, if it dare, that heaven is a mere state of blessedness; but, to be consistent, it ought to go on to deny, with the ancient heretics referred to by St. John, that 'Jesus Christ is come in the flesh,' and maintain that his presence on earth was a mere vision; for certain it is, he who appeared on earth went up from the earth, and a cloud received Him out of His apostles' sight. And here, again, an additional difficulty occurs, on minutely considering the subject. Whither did He go? Beyond the sun? Beyond the fixed stars? Did He traverse the immeasurable space which extends beyond them all? Again, what is meant by *ascending*? Philosophers will say, there is no difference between *down* and *up* as regards the sky; yet, whatever difficulties the word may occasion, we can hardly take upon us to decide, that it is a mere popular expression, consistently with the reverence due to the sacred record. And thus we are led on to consider, how different are the character and effect of the Scripture notices of the structure of the physical world, from those which philosophers deliver. I am not deciding whether or not the one or the other are reconcileable; I merely say their respective *effect* is different. And when we have deduced what we deduce, by our reason, from the study of visible nature; and then read what we read in his inspired Word, and find the two apparently discordant, this is the feeling I think we ought to have on our minds; not an impatience to do what is beyond our powers, &c. &c. . . . . I will but remind you, on this part of the subject, that our Lord is to come from heaven 'in like manner as he went;' that he is to come 'in clouds;' that 'every eye shall see Him, and all tribes of the earth wail because of Him.' Attempt to solve this prediction according to the received theories of science, and you will discover their shallowness. They are unequal to the depth of the problem."— *Sermon on the Feast of Ascension, by J. H. Newman, Fellow of Oriel, Vicar of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford.*

"I have made the foregoing remark, in order to impress upon you the mystery with which we are encompassed all about; such as not merely to attach to one or two truths of religion, but extending to almost every sacred fact, and to every action of our lives. With the same view, let me observe upon the doctrine which accompanies the fact of the ascension. Christ, we are told, has gone up on high, 'to present himself before the face of God for us.' He has 'entered by his own blood, once for all, into the Holy Place: having effected eternal Redemption' — 'He ever liveth to make intercession for those who come unto God by Him; He hath a priesthood which will not pass from Him.' — 'We have such an High Priest, who is set on the right hand of the

throne of the Majesty in the Heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true Tabernacle; which the Lord pitched, and not man.' These, and similar passages, refer us to the rites of the Jewish Law. They contain notice of the type; but what is the Antitype? We can give no precise account of it. For consider; *why* was it that Christ ascended on high? With what object? What is His work? What is the meaning of his interceding for us in heaven? We know that, whatever he does, it is the gracious reality of the Mosaic figure. The High Priest, entering with the atoning blood into the Holiest, was a representation of Christ's gracious deed in our behalf. But what is that deed? We know what the shadow is; what is the substance? The death of Christ answers to the Jewish rite of Atonement; how does He vouchsafe to fulfil the rite of Intercession? Instead of explaining, Scripture does but continue to answer us in the language of the type; even to the last, it veils His deeds under the ancient figure. Shall we, therefore, explain away its language as merely figurative, which (as the word is now commonly understood) is next to saying it has no meaning at all? Far from it. Clouds and darkness are round about him. We are not given to see into the secret shrine in which God dwells. Before Him stands the Seraphim, veiling their faces. Christ is within the veil. We must not search curiously what is His present office; what is meant by His pleading His sacrifice, and by His perpetual Intercession for us. And since we do not know, we will studiously keep to the figure given us in Scripture; we will not attempt to interpret it, or change the wording of it, being wise above what is written. We will not neglect it, because we do not understand it. We will hold it as a Mystery, or, (what was anciently called) a truth sacramental; that is, a high invisible grace lodged in an outward form, a precious possession to be piously and thankfully guarded for the sake of the heavenly reality contained in it. Thus much we see in it, the pledge of a doctrine which reason cannot understand; viz. of the influence of the prayer of faith upon the divine counsels. The Intercessor directs, or stays, the hand of the Unchangeable and Sovereign Governor of the World; being at once the meritorious cause, and the earnest of the intercessory power of his brethren. 'Christ rose again for our justification,'—'The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much,' are both infinite mercies and deep mysteries."—*Ibid.*

Thus are we furnished with the two principal kinds of theology which have prevailed in the church; the one which explains the mysteries of Christian doctrine, the other which leaves them unexplained, or considers them inexplicable; for I am not aware of any intermediate system,* except that which either avoids all reference to the subject, or treats of it as little as possible. In the first class of extracts, under the divisions of *Dusk and Midnight*, may be seen an illustration of the desecration of Divine Doctrine

* Though Dr. Pye Smith seems to be at a loss to determine the exact meaning of the word *intercede*, he does not appear, on the whole, to deviate much from the ordinary views.

by the introduction of the ideas of the merely natural man. This desecration is the consequence of those who approach Jehovah, "*not taking their shoes from off their feet;*" in other words, according to Swedenborg's comment, "*not divesting their minds of merely carnal and sensual ideas.*" On the other hand, in the last class of extracts may be seen the confessed darkness in which the mind is left upon the mysteries of the gospel, when it is divested of the merely natural idea. Both are a fulfilment of the prophecy of the latter days, of which, we are told, "The Sun became black as sackcloth;" by which, says Victorinus, is meant, "*The splendor of true doctrine will be hid from unbelievers.*"— *See Adams on the Opening of the Sealed Book.*

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